

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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CONTENTS

	Page.		Page.
Notes and Happenings	1	The Koran—What does it Teach,	
God or Man? by Anandaprasad		by Ima Rebel	26
Chatterjee	7	The Rationalist Youth League ...	29
Religious Blindness, by R. D.		Birth Control will reduce Maternal	
Karve	19	Morality	30
The Future of Religion, by A. A.		A Lecture of the Rationalist Youth	
Khan Usmani	23	League	31

Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

We have already drawn attention in these columns to the existence of a Christian Sadhu who is alleged to perform miraculous cures. When we first heard of him he was in ~~Punna~~ where a number of people flocked to receive the benefit of his "supernatural" powers. In his great charity for suffering humanity he

extended his operations to Bombay where he appeared last month. As may be guessed he soon attracted attention and for some days he was followed by a large crowd. A large number of sick children were taken to him and it was pitiful to see these poor helpless sufferers exposed to sun for hours by their silly parents

with the hope that the faith healer would cure them. It did not take long for these credulous people to be disillusioned. No miracle took place, but a lot of money exchanged hands. It is sad to think that among the eager crowd who sought the ministry of that adventurer the Parsees predominated. It is strange that the Parsees are always strongly attracted by charlatans. Being more educated than the rest here they should know better. But mysticism always appeals to them and they must pay the price for their credulity until they are enlightened enough to understand that the age of miracles is gone never to come back again.

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Our Association has done well to inaugurate a novel social function which should soon become very popular. It has decided to hold a lunch several times during the year at which members and their friends may meet. The first meeting of this kind at Mongini's, Bombay, in Oct. last was a grand success. More than sixty members and their friends spent a pleasant hour or two together and enjoyed the good things provided by the caterers.

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We are glad to notice that a large number of young men professing Rationalism have banded themselves together and formed a Rationalist Youth League. There has been a good response to its call and already about 75 members have enlisted. Its objects are to encourage Rationalism, disseminating pamphlets and tracts on Freethought, holding lectures and do propaganda work in general.

It intends to work in co-operation with Our Association. The following is the message of the League delivered by

Mr. A. Salomon, the Hony. Secretary.

Coming of the Rationalist Youth League.

"Our elders fail frequently because they are rigid in their minds and unable to change their mental outlook or adapt themselves to changing facts. Youth is not hidebound nor rigid. Youth can think and is not afraid of the consequences of thought.....And it is because Youth can think and dare act that it holds out the promise of taking this country and this world of ours out from the ruts and mire into which they have sunk." Jawaharlal Nehru.

Here we are; we youths have come forward to do all we can to free the country from all superstition and fear. We shall not allow ourselves to be influenced by tradition or drugged by mysticism. We want facts, we want the TRUTH. We shall not follow the old because it is old or reject the new because it is new. We shall fearlessly reject what we rationally think to be wrong and courageously support what we think to be right. The Rationalist Youth League is formed. We are proud to say that our League, The Rationalist Youth League, stands for freedom of thought and dares to follow the teachings of Reason.

If some pious people when they hear of this League accuse us of inexperience, I shall reply them in Chatham's words: "I shall neither palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience".

We shall work with the ardour of conviction and the zeal for the service of what is right and reasonable.

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That the League is in earnest may be seen by its activities. Already it has delivered an interesting lecture on Rationalism by Mr. S. A. Megherian, (the Editor of "Calvacade") of which we publish a resume elsewhere. It has arranged to distribute thousands of pamphlets and tracts such as the following:—"What it is worth?" "A study of the Bible" by Col. R. G. Ingersoll. "What is Secularism." "Do you want the Truth" "Does Man desire God" all pamphlets by the National Secular Society, "The Belief of Unbelievers" By Chapman Cohen. We wish the League every success.

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It is well known that a good deal of superstition about the East in general and India in particular, exists in England. In this connection it is interesting to read the book, "The Myth of the Mystic East" by Colonel R. H. Elliot. M. D., I. M. S. which has recently been published by Messrs Blackpool and Co. It deals mostly with the belief that exists in England about the occult powers of the Indians. It would appear that many people in England firmly believe that Indians are endowed with such mystical and occult powers that they can perform countless uncanny things which baffle the science of the West. Colonel Elliot, who has lived many years in India, exposes all this nonsense. He gives an instance of the credulity of some people in England regarding this:—

"In a large provincial town in England recently a drapery and furnishing establishment staged an Indian Village to attract their customers. An Indian Swami, so called in the advertisement, told fortunes. I saw and spoke with the Swami,

who had been once a cook and came from Goa. He was suitably dressed in a white turban and a flowing robe. A few stuffed snakes, and a crystal globe on a pseudo-Eastern table decorated his consulting room, and the place reeked with incense and synthetic jasmine. His services was in great demand, and for half an hour I watched the continual stream of people passing in and out of the Swami's presence. They were obviously impressed with his prognostications. I heard one woman say to a companion:—"Of course these Indians do understand the mysterious. They are born with second sight." Others implied the same thing. Few of us here would credit our Goan cooks with such uncanny powers.

Colonel Elliot also exposes the so-called rope trick and the superstition about snakes.

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"When truth is revealed," said St. Augustine, "let custom give place, let no man prefer custom before reason and truth." In India, it is quite the opposite. People here prefer custom and tradition; they have no time for Reason and Truth.

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We read in the newspapers that Mrs. Edith How-Martyn, well-known birth-control worker, who left Karachi for Hyderabad (Sind) to-day, announced that it was proposed to hold an all-India Birth-Control Conference, in December, in Travancore, just after the all-India Women's Conference, which would be held there this year.

She said that Lord Horder, the well-known Harley Street physician, would be invited to preside over the conference,

and that she hoped to complete all the preliminary arrangements in connection with it before she left India in March.

Emphasising the importance of imparting birth control education to the Indian masses, Mrs. How-Martyn pointed out that no lasting improvement in the standard of living of the people could possibly be attained if every enhancement of the purchasing power of the cultivator was to be followed by a proportionate increase in the population—precisely, she added, the view taken by the Linlithgow Commission.

To Indians who objected to birth-control on religious and moral grounds, Mrs. How-Martyn said she had only to quote the opinion of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, who felt that in a hunger-stricken country like India, it was cruel thoughtlessly to bring more children into existence than could properly be taken care of causing endless suffering to them and imposing degrading conditions upon the whole family.

This is welcome news. We shall doubtless hear a good deal of protest against this by the usual fanatics who have their own ideas about "God's laws," "Morality" and so forth. These people think that birth-control is immoral; that it is against "God's laws", that is to say laws of their own invention, that it is detrimental to health, that it encourages race suicide. Those people who utter such views are generally well cared for and well-fed priests who do not care two-pence for the agonies and miseries of unwanted children who come into this world to suffer the pangs of hunger, the pains of diseases and to die a miserable death before they even begin to talk. It is

only natural that the Churches should welcome large populations. It means larger congregations for them for the perpetuation of their superstitions and the retardation of progress.

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There is no doubt that the pulpit has taken great advantage of Sir James Jeans' belief that a Celestial Mathematician constructed the Universe as an instance of an eminent scientist supporting religion. Some theologians have gone so far as to proclaim that such eminent scientists as Sir James Jeans, Sir A. Eddington, Prof. Whitehead and a few others have, by their discoveries and speculations in physical science, completely discredited what they are pleased to call the materialistic science of the last century. The fact is that these scientists have done nothing of the kind. They are, of course, free to speculate on the latest revelations of physical science, though in doing so they leave the scientific realm to penetrate into a metaphysical one in which their opinions carry no greater weight than others who have so speculated. Far from discrediting science and upholding superstitious beliefs as these religious people would have us believe, Sir James Jeans made a vigorous defence of Science in his Presidential Address to 3,000 members of the British Association at Aberdeen in Autumn last. He said:—

"It was obvious, that a country which called a halt to scientific progress would soon fall behind in every other respect as well. Although some new inventions had thrown people out of work, scientific discoveries had provided work for millions."

* * *

Sir James added: "Those who sigh for an Arcadia, wherein all machinery is scrapped and all invention is proclaimed crime as in "Erewhon," forget that Erewhonians have neither to compete with highly organised scientific competitions for the trade of the world, nor to protect themselves against possible bomb-dropping, blockade or invasion.

"If science has made attack more deadly in war, it has also made defence more efficient. In the long run it will show no partiality in the age long race between weapons of attack and defence.

"This being so, it would, I think, be hard to maintain in cold blood that its activities are likely to make wars either more frequent or more prolonged. It would at least be arguable that a more deadly war would be less likely to occur. Still it might occur.

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"Science has given man control over Nature before he has gained control over himself. Scientific knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another, while acquired characteristics are not. Thus in respect of knowledge each generation stands on the same ground. These are hard facts which we cannot hope to alter and which we may as well admit may wreck civilisation.

"If there is an avenue of escape it lies as I see it, not in the direction of less science, but in the direction of more science in psychology, which holds out the hope that for the first time in his long history man may be enabled to obey the command "Know thyself."

"To this I for one would like to see adjoined a morality and, if possible even

a religion, consistent with our new psychological knowledge and established facts of science, a scientific and constructive measure of eugenics and birth control, scientific research in agriculture and industry sufficient at least to defeat the gloomy prophecies of Malthus and to enable even larger populations to live in comfort and contentment on the same limited area of land. Our great need at the moment is for industrial discoveries."

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A reader of "Reason", some time ago, sent us a newspaper cutting in which a summary of an address delivered by a Father L. D. Murphy at Madras a few months ago is given. He wishes us to comment on this. It is not easy to comment on the mere summary of an address. To judge by the following it would appear that the address was full of the usual cant of Catholic priests when out to boost their creed. Father Murphy, in effect, is reported to have said among other things that Christian nations of to-day were Christian in name only and had forgotten the spirit. In his lecture he would deal with the specifically distinctive characteristics of the religion of Christ. Externally, Christianity was a religion of severity and non-Christians might be disappointed with the principles of the Gospel. Christ had said that it was impossible to serve God and Mammon. The Bible stated: "It is as easy for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." The hyperbole, Father Murphy, asserted was not extravagant. Man in his search after riches, pushed out God and life became ruinous. Wealth by itself was not bad as nothing created by God could be bad. The falling away from Christianity in the West was due to

its quest after wealth. The feverish pursuit of wealth was a blot on Western civilisation. He could never support sweated labour in factories which was the result of consuming devotion to Mammon. The renunciation of wealth was perfect in the teaching of Christ. It was want of courage, want of a spirit of adventure that made people go after wealth. Riches in themselves were not bad but riches must be under the supervision of God, not for personal aggrandisement and excluding worship of God.

In conclusion, he referred to the persecution of Christianity from the time of Christ and so long as one was in the company of Christ, the yoke was sweeter and the burden lighter and to-day Russia and Germany were up against Christianity but Christianity would brave it up.

* * *

Father Murphy must have spoken with his tongue in his cheek when he uttered such balderdash. He admitted that Christianity was falling away in the West and his belief about this is because people there are in quest after wealth! Of course, these blind people will never admit that their creed has been found out, and that with the spread of education, the enlightened all over the world no longer believe in their fables. It is simply amusing to hear the disparagement of wealth by a Catholic priest. Why? Nobody appreciates wealth better than Catholic priests. Imagine the princes of the Church—both Catholic and Protestant—abandoning their luxuries, their palaces, their aristocratic sur-

roundings, to live like Christ who is reported to have said that the foxes have holes to live in but the Son of Man has not even a place to sleep in. Father Murphy would not stay a minute in Madras if the source of his well being there was suddenly cut off.

* * *

As regards his lament about the failure of Christianity in the West and cause of it which, as we have seen, he puts down to the quest for wealth and so forth, if he was sincere he would have admitted that the spread of education is responsible for this and nothing else.

When on this topic priests and parsons are fond of assuring their followers that Christianity is falling off because it has not yet been tried properly.

After 1900 years of trial in which Christianity has had every opportunity to do as it wished—as every body knows, it suppressed all opposition, enforced its own teaching and compelled belief by fire and sword and other dreadful measures—it has the effrontery to tell us now that Christianity has not been sufficiently tried yet.

In Madras the platitudes of Father Murphy were evidently listened to with great respect. Little wonder! Things that are no longer saleable in European markets find ready buyers here in India. Father Murphy and his likes should really concentrate all their efforts on this country where a long lease of life is yet assured to all kind of creeds.

GOD OR MAN?

It is an undeniable fact that the majority of mankind, in every age and country, from the very earliest times, have acknowledged themselves as being quite helpless and timid when confronted with the unknown and the mysterious—though ever present—forces of nature. Death, disease, earthquakes, cyclones &c. have always paralysed the activities of man and rendered him helpless. Misfortunes have always predominated in his career, and successes comparatively few. That peace of mind and freedom from discomforts, which have always been the dream of humanity everywhere in all ages, have been really attained by the exceptional few, if at all.

No wonder, then, that never being successful in his attempts at attaining the always-desired freedom from grief and worry, and never having succeeded in attaining mastery over death and the other visitations of nature which have made his life so miserable, man has always lent a ready ear to the preaching and teaching of those who have assured him that there is a beneficent and powerful Being who will some day or other, whether here or in after life, right all his wrongs soothe all his sorrows and remove all his miseries, punish the wicked and reward the virtuous. Though unseen, man has been taught to believe that this beneficent Being always watches over him, and will some day or other redress all his wrongs by taking him to a land where he will enjoy everlasting bliss. He has also been taught to believe that those who disobey this unseen Being in this life will be condemned to terrible punishment—in the other world.

This is what goes by the name of religion throughout the world, and mankind has, almost without exception, accepted one or other of these religions. The reasons for this universal acceptance are not far to seek. Firstly, because of his helplessness and inability to remove his troubles in spite of best endeavours, he has always been glad to learn that there is another Agency—though unseen and unknown for the time being—Who will some day or other reveal Himself in his divine effulgence, and come to his aid and remove all his sufferings, and secondly, because of his conviction that a belief in the existence of this Divine Being will actually make this world a much better place than it really is.

And precisely for that reason, individuals, having the hardihood of questioning the truth of the existence of this Divine Being, have been everywhere persecuted, condemned and tortured. Even today, when torture for difference of religious opinions is comparatively unknown (though not entirely absent) only a man with a very strong courage of his conviction is found to be definitely and boldly taking up the attitude that God does NOT exist, and that a belief in His existence does not necessarily elevate the moral nature of the believer. To be known as an atheist is almost equivalent—even in this rationalistic age—to be afflicted with moral leprosy, resulting in social ostracism. There are individuals throughout the world, and their number is neither few nor far between, who quite honestly believe that even the worst criminal—provided he belongs to some religion or other—is far

better than the atheist, who is an embodiment of all that is wicked.

Curiously enough, this view, so universally held, will be found on a calm and dispassionate examination of actual facts to be generally incorrect. Almost every condemned murderer is found to be readily listening to the religious consolation of the priest of the sect to which he belongs, before going to the gallows. Almost every thief or forger or ravisher in and out of gaol happens to profess some religion or other. They cannot, therefore, be said to be better than an atheist (assuming the latter to be the incarnation of Satan himself—who, incidentally, if the Biblical legend is correct, was not an atheist) because they choose to believe in the existence of God. History contains instances of many God-fearing saints and hermits who have caused more blood to flow and more crimes to be committed than many others whose avowed profession was plunder or theft and bloodshed. The most bloody wars and massacres are those that have been committed in the name of religion by God-fearing prelates and potentates. The most atrocious persecutions have been those that have been carried on in the interests of religion. The most venomous and deadly form of hatred is that which is cherished by the follower of one religion against that of another, both believing in the existence of God.

Religion and a belief in God, therefore, do not necessarily help in making the world a better place than what it would have been without them. On the other hand, assuming the truth of what we have stated above, they sometimes make it worse.

Now, is there any evidence worth the name to show that the atheist is really the bad man he is so often represented to be? Is there any record to show that out of the huge number of mal-factors who have disgraced humanity from time immemorial, atheists have preponderated? Have they ever oppressed and murdered their neighbours for not being atheists? Does history contain any instance when atheists have been found to be guilty of a St. Bartholomew's Day or of the Crusade? It is really very hard to understand the grounds on which the poor atheist is represented as a vile wretch unworthy of breathing God's air, and living in God's world, fit only for the halter stake.

On the other hand, History does contain at least a few instances of atheists who, by the manner of their living, have actually helped in making at least a small portion of this world of ours a much better place than what it would have otherwise been. Have we not heard of utter disbelievers in God, nevertheless serving humanity nobly in every walk of life, feeding the poor, relieving the distressed, reforming abuses, and doing every other thing which is usually regarded as the monopoly of the God-fearing and the religiously disposed? Have we not heard of atheists shedding their last drop of blood for suffering humanity?

To be brief, we are definitely of opinion that one need not be a good man or a bad man just because one is a theist or atheist. Or, in other words, a belief or disbelief in the existence of God has nothing to do with the goodness or badness of his moral nature.

But it will be said, "all this might perhaps apply to the advanced and edu-

cated, but not to the illiterate and less advanced, who would certainly have been more depraved and ferocious if God and religion had never been taught to them. This is a myth. No murderer, cultured or otherwise, is ever restrained from cutting the throat of his victim by the belief that if he did so, God would punish him eternally for his crime. No liar is prevented from perjuring himself by the horrors of a future punishment at the hands of an unknown God. If such had been the case, very few men professing any religion would have been found guilty of any moral turpitude. As a matter of fact, avowed atheists are so rare in numbers that the percentage of criminality can be said to be almost non-existent within their ranks, if at all. It invariably requires moral courage of the highest order to be a sincere and real atheist, and such a class does not usually produce bad men.

Why then this universal prejudice against them? Why is it that we find followers of different religions agreeing in nothing else, and running at each other's throats at little or no provocation, always agreeing in their hatred and condemnation of atheists? The answer is not far to seek. If they don't agree with each other on many other points, they at least agree in believing that God exists. The atheist differs from them in this vital respect. He is pitted alone against the whole world, so to say. Nothing is easier for the "religionists" than to show off their superiority and contempt for the poor atheist by pretending to hate him. It is a melancholy, but none the less true and undeniable trait of human nature that we are in a position to be above somebody else. The atheist enables us, by virtue

of his isolated position, to do this. Small wonder then if he is thus made the universal target for contempt, ridicule and hatred. How often it has been my lot to see hypocrites of the first water, but professing some religion or other speaking of a saintly atheist—one, the latchet of whose shoe they were unfit to touch—with withering scorn on the sole ground that he honestly and in spite of utmost endeavours could not persuade himself to believe in the existence of an unknown and unknowable God.

Another reason why followers of religions agree so unanimously in decrying the atheist lies in the fact that his theory tends to shatter all their fond hopes and belief and leave them disheartened. These good souls somehow or other manage to outlive all their miseries in this world—their sorrows and bereavements, their failures and worries—almost exclusively with the fond expectation that in some strange and unaccountable way, all their losses in this life will be made good by some imaginary Gods. It never occurs to these good souls that a Being who never cares to manifest Himself, even for the fraction of a second to His devoted children whom He is supposed to love so much, who never hesitates to wipe them off from the face of the earth by thousands and tens of thousands (as in the case of earthquakes, epidemics &c.) for no conceivable fault of theirs, can hardly be expected to care for in a future state of existence, of which there is absolutely no evidence worth the name. But to be deprived suddenly of this grand consolation by a person who has the unpardonable effrontery of telling them to their faces that their beloved God does not exist,

constitutes in their eyes an offence for which no punishment is too severe. They never stop to consider if what the despised atheist says is consistent with probability and reason. Like the red rag to the bull, the mere statement is enough for them.

One of the main reasons advanced almost in every instance by theist to show that they are right and the atheists wrong is the fact that they hopelessly outnumber their rivals. "If", they pompously declare, "God had not really existed, we would not have found almost everybody in all ages believing in His existence". And such is the way of the world that this is considered by even many sensible people to be a most convincing reason. They would never care to discuss the matter honestly, logically and frankly, but declare the other side to be mistaken and dishonest, merely because their number was out of all proportion greater than that of their rivals. The mere fact that a certain thing has been implicitly believed in by the world at large, say, for five thousand years, appears to them to be proof conclusive of its truth. As if things, the truth of which had been held as unassailable in the past, have never been since disproved! As if innocent men have never been wickedly persecuted and tortured for not believing in things which have been since proved beyond doubt to be moonshine.

Having thus attempted to make out that a belief or disbelief in the existence of God or religion does not tend to make us better or worse men, we shall now proceed to discuss the question whether or not He exists at all.

Does God exist? If so, what is the proof? If no satisfactory proof is forth-

coming, shall we continue to believe in Him, merely because a host of people have done so? Why should we thus believe in His existence notwithstanding the non-existence of proof?

We will now discuss these questions, little caring for what the believers might say in return, if they at all think it worth their while to say anything by way of refutation. The last word on the subject has not certainly been said as yet. And the very fact that arguments and discussions are still waged from time to time to prove or disprove the existence of God goes to show that the world is not yet unanimous on the question. If it was, we should have heard no more about it. Nobody argues, for instance now a days, as to whether or not any two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third side. And so long as that degree of certainty is not reached, arguments and discussions must continue. Only the enemies of truth and progress will seek to shut them out. Such arguments and discussions can never indeed be unprofitable. And as we shall presently try to make out, they can be of the highest value.

How do we seek to establish the existence of anything? Must the criterion of proof be different in the case where the existence of God is the subject at issue? If so, why? And what are the other criteria by which one is to abide?

Very few people, if at all, claim to have seen God. The generally accepted view is that He is formless, and as such, invisible. There are, as already observed just an infinitesimally small number of men who claim to have actually seen Him. Without calling their veracity in

to question even for a moment, it nevertheless remains to be considered if they really saw Him or fancied that they saw Him. We do not say that they were dishonest men, who deliberately bluffed and hoodwinked a credulous public. But does that necessarily go to show that they could not have been in any conceivable manner the unconscious dupes of their own imagination? Of the designedly rascally group of imposters and charlatans who deliberately attempt at swindling their community into entertaining false and extravagant notions relating to God and His attributes, I propose to say little, though their influence and the extent of mischief wrought by them is by no means inconsiderable. But even eliminating them from the field of our present inquiry, it is by no means sure that God exists just because some really good and virtuous men have told us from time to time that they saw Him, or what amounts to the same thing, He revealed Himself to them.

But it will be argued by not a few (whose number is by far the greatest) that although He cannot be seen with the eyes, as we see other tangible objects, He can be realised, and His influence felt. The reply is, "How"? How are we to be sure that what we sometimes ascribe to the influence of God, is really so, and not a mere combination of circumstances? I pray fervently, for instance, for being cured of a malady I am suffering from, pronounced by skilled doctors to be past all surgery and past all aid. My prayer is apparently granted, and to the astonishment of friends and foes alike, and of the doctors themselves, I recover. Does that prove beyond all reasonable doubt that I owe my recovery to Divine intercession?

Have there not been patients known to recover from apparently hopeless diseases without offering any prayer at all? Has not the same patient who once recovered by what he thought to be the sole result of devout and fervent prayer, been known to succumb in another instance in spite of prayers no less devout and fervent as on the first occasion? Do we not find numberless victims suffering from untold agony in the shape of disease, starvation, poverty, bereavement &c, in spite of sincere prayers offered to God every moment of their lives? How are we then to feel and realise the existence of God?

Take another instance. An apparently hopeless victim to Drink is found to rally and abandon drinking for the rest of his days. Devout theists at once ascribe the miracle to the mercy of God. The victim himself acknowledges it with sincere thanksgiving. Does that prove irrefutably that it is due to God? Is it altogether unreasonable to hold that the cure is due to the exercise of his will-power? Why should we, when it is possible to find out known and ascertainable causes, go in quest of unknown and inexplicable ones? That, we contend, should be the attitude of a rational, bold, honest and self-reliant mind. A fondness for the mysterious and vague in life is too often the outcome of timidity and helplessness. and ignorance.

God is said to be kind and merciful. Indeed, in every age and country, the conception of kindness seems to be inseparable from the conception of Godhead. Speaking for ourselves, we cannot help wondering that this should have persisted through so many cen-

turies, notwithstanding the diffusion of so much knowledge and wisdom. People for whom we have the highest regard, not only for the depth of their knowledge, but also for their stainless character, piety and benevolence are found to be unanimous in their belief in God. And that is the reason why we propose to go into this question and discuss it somewhat elaborately, according to the degree of intelligence we happen to possess. He is said to be not only merciful, but also the Divine Father of the universe and everything contained therein.

Let us try to find out if God—supposing He exists—can be called kind and fatherly, even by the most violent stretch of the imagination. He is said to be all-powerful. Why does misery exist? Does an almighty and loving Father, even in this imperfect world, suffer his children to undergo so much grinding misery and torture and sees it unmoved when he can remove it by a mere exercise of his will-power? Every well informed man knows that the whole world is full of unnecessary and cruel warfare. Man wages war against man and beasts. Beasts prey upon each other and upon man alike. One must kill in order to live. Why this fierce and relentless struggle for existence? What is the beneficent idea underlying the doctrine of “survival of the fittest”? Why should the weak always go to the wall? Is it consistent with the existence of a loving all-powerful Father? Why these virulent diseases, leprosy, plague, insanity, tuberculosis and others too numerous to mention? Need we really multiply instances?

It will be said, man suffers by his own folly, and it is sacrilegious to find fault

with the Creator. Is that an axiomatic truth which always holds good? What offence, for instance, has a child, fresh from its mother's womb, committed when it is born into the world with poisonous sores all over its body, or born blind? Or deaf or lame? Why should the sins of the parents be visited on the heads of their unoffending children? Supposing, as some seriously contend, that such punishments to the newly born are due to their having committed sins in some previous incarnation, where is the sense in making the poor little thing entirely oblivious of what it had done in such previous incarnation? Where is the evidence to show that it had ever existed in a previous incarnation? All punishments, in order to be effective, and salutary, should be inflicted in a manner by which the offender might feel that he is being punished for some particular offence committed even in a previous incarnation. But if he is utterly oblivious of what he did in that previous incarnation, how can the punishment be of any use?

Then again, are we to understand that when a vast body of men suffer for wrongs committed by a handful of wicked persons, all the sufferers deserve their hard fate? A war, for instance, is declared by a group of scheming cabinet ministers in a particular country. What offence have millions of unborn babes committed throughout the globe that they must be doomed to life-long poverty and suffering in consequence thereof? Is this divine justice and divine mercy? A ship, to take another instance, goes down with thousands of men by crashing against an iceberg at dead of night. Were all the helpless individuals on

board that ship equally guilty so as to deserve the same fate? And supposing they were, what about the widows and orphans? What about their life-long penury and starvation? Is it the work of a kind and just and all-powerful Father?

An earthquake reduces hundreds of flourishing towns to a mass of debris in the twinkling of an eye, while the "kind Father", having full power to shield and protect them does absolutely nothing. As if to the misery already inflicted He sends pestilence and floods to wipe out the last flicker in all these places. What is this? Mercy indeed! What had the unoffending babes and animals done in all these places to deserve this "fatherly treatment"?

Are these cases rare? Do we not find them taking place almost daily in some part of the world or other? Must we pin our faith on the sayings of prophets and Mahatmas that the sufferings thus caused are due solely and exclusively to the sins of the sufferers? What right has the prophet or Mahatma to utter such monstrous opinions?

Either there is a God, or there is not. If there is one, such things can never be explained except on the assumption that though all-powerful, He is far from being kind, just and merciful. If He is non-existent, it is high time that the truth was proclaimed fearlessly from house tops. An unjust God is inconceivable and a contradiction in terms.

At this stage, we feel sure, the assurance of a future state of existence will come in. "This world is not all. There are many, many others," will be the consolation offered to us. "Whatever

little inconveniences you might be subjected to in this life in the shape of congenital maladies, slow processes of starvation, abject poverty, unjustified tyranny, &c, &c., will all be atoned for in a bright future in the next world, 'where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest'". 'God, Himself, will see to that' we are assured by almost every religion. New-fledged pseudo-scientists also rush in to help religion by saying, "you need not any longer entertain any doubt as to the existence of the next world, Spiritualism has solved the mystery once for all."

In reply to these consoling words of assurance, we would like to ask why, even admitting the existence of a future life after death, should we care to suffer even for a moment unmerited punishment at the hands of an unfailing, just and merciful Father? A punishment is a punishment, and on no account for however short a period—should one be made to undergo it without rhyme or reason, even if one is compensated for it in a future state of existence by the enjoyment of eternal bliss. Surely He must be a fantastic judge who would needlessly punish an innocent person on the ground that an eternal period of enjoyment would follow the short spell of misery consequent on the punishment. Even human justice, imperfect and vindictive as it is, hesitates to punish an individual without making him feel the nature of the offence committed by him and without satisfactory proof of his guilt. What must we say of a perfect and Divine Being, overflowing with the milk of kindness towards His creatures, and posing as their Father, never hesitating to punish them for offences, the nature of which they are not even aware

and for many of which they are in all probability not responsible?

Then again, is it an undisputed fact that there is a future state of existence, where all wrongs will be righted? What proof of it is forthcoming, saving and excepting the vapourings of a few dabblers in the equivocal subject of spiritualism, and the ipse-dixit of some preachers? Has communication between the living and the dead been established beyond doubt in the sense that we now communicate with a distant friend by wireless to-day? Assuming even for the moment that it has, have the spiritualists been able to satisfy us beyond all doubt that existence there is such an unqualified blessing as to make amends for all our unmerited sufferings here? If not, why drag the question of a life beyond death into the present discussion?

It will next be argued that everman is by his very nature a sinner, and that no punishment, however severe, can be said to be "too severe", when inflicted on him. All of us should, instead of being rebellious really be grateful to the Divine Father that in His infinite mercy and wisdom, He has not condemned us to more severe forms of punishment (in this life) for our misdeeds. In proof of his infinite mercy and love, we are reminded by the followers of a particular religion that the same punishment awaits all sinners—be their guilt however great or small—if they do not accept certain things as undisputed facts. You may have been a genuine philanthropist in your earthly life, you may never have cherished the slightest ill-will towards anybody while on earth, and you may have done a thousand other good things, but all these will avail you no-

thing if you did not accept a particular individual, borne close upon a thousand years ago, as the only Saviour and Mediator between yourself and your Heavenly Father, and you are sure to be condemned eternally to be consumed by the Fire which never quencheth and to be devoured by the Fire which dieth not, for this single act of problematic transgression.

Let us assume that we are all born sinners, "conceived in sin", for whom no punishment is severe enough, and that it is the divine clemency alone which does not condemn us to worse forms of punishment (though we must humbly beg leave to state that we can conceive of no worse form of punishment than to be condemned by never-quenching fire, and devoured by never-dying worms). But will our theistic friends condescend to inform us for our salvation as to Who implanted in our frail hearts this desire to commit so many deadly sins? Who created the First Man with such temptation in his mind? We, his descendants, are perhaps being justly punished in addition to our own sins—also committed as a result of irresistible temptations—for the sins of our ancestors of the nth degree. But what divine necessity was there for the all-powerful and merciful Father by which He made the first sinner on earth frail enough to succumb to temptation? Couldn't He, in His omnipotence, make His beloved creatures proof against all evil temptations that flesh is heir to? Could it have been His deliberate object to create an imperfect world, peopled by timid, weak and imperfect beings, thirsting for each other's blood, falling victims to the first temptation offering itself, and then subjecting them to untold miseries

for their transgressions? Does the merciful Providence and heavenly Father rejoice in suffering for its own sake? The man who is reported to have exclaimed, "If I were God, I could have created a better world really expressed a true saying!"

I beg to assure the reader in all humility, that it is in no sacrilegious spirit that I write this article. The views expressed above represent my innermost convictions, born out of a supreme disability to reconcile the idea of existence of God with the prevailing state of affairs. For nearly half a century, I have tried to maintain my faith in the existence of God. Often did I waver in that faith, but always came back to it, feeling that I may be wrong, and what I had been taught to believe must be right. But I now feel, perhaps once for all, that it is no longer possible for me to entertain any the existence of a thoroughly callous and heartless mysterious Being, who, having the power to banish all misery from this universe quietly watches it and suffers His so-called "beloved" children to wallow in the mire of agony. I also seem to feel that the time is about to come when mankind will refuse to be duped any longer into believing such an absurdity. The mere fact that they have in the past entertained such a belief almost universally, is no reason why they will continue to do so ever afterwards, as already stated. The oft-repeated parrot-cry that man, by becoming irreligious everywhere in the world, will soon draw upon himself divine wrath and vengeance, will I am convinced, no longer succeed in making him return to God-fearing ways of life. Old superstitions always die hard, and

take an unconscionably long time in disappearing. Instead of sorrowing, the real well-wisher of mankind should rejoice at the prospect of deliverance from the thralldom of a supposed divinity. The millineum will only dawn, if at all, when God is universally rejected.

We shall now proceed to show the good results which are likely to be caused in consequence of the abandonment of the ideas of God and religion throughout the world. They can be briefly enumerated thus:—

(a) **Establishment of an Universal Brotherhood.**—This is the most important item. Religion is the most potent factor which helps in keeping man apart from man. Here in India, this appears to be the only thing which prevents a Hindu from calling a Mussalman his brother. Let it be abolished once for all, and the miracle is bound to happen. Is there absolutely any difference between a Hindu and a Moslem except in matters of religion so far at least as India is concerned? With the same language, same mother country, almost the same food, and living side by side for close upon a thousand years, the things that prevent these two big communities from blending their interests and forming one great nation, must be pure and unmixed evils. Is further proof necessary? We have every reason to believe that not only Hindus and Muhammadans in India, but Muhammadans in every other part of Asia, will not take a long time in being fused together, if they all agreed on giving up their respective religions. Think of the immense potentialities of a Federated Asia? Is religion such a great thing that we cannot afford to sacrifice it at

the altar of humanity for this grand object? Let us serve Man instead of a non-existent God. Westerners might perhaps require a longer time to conquer their colour prejudice and to be merged with Asia by giving up their religion and God. But they are bound to, sooner or later, if we can show them the way. There is nothing Utopian or Quixotic in the idea, which is intensely practical. Every other method has been preached, and some practised. But **all of them have failed.** There is no other way. None but an enemy of the whole human race, blinded by race and colour prejudice, should oppose the idea. God and religion, by pretending to be able to bring us together, have hitherto succeeded in only keeping us apart. Away with them, if the millenium is really to dawn on earth. "Man, not God," should be the new slogan, in our march to perfection.

(b) **Abolition of War and Establishment of Peace.** This is also bound to come, and is indeed covered by the former item, to wit, an Universal Brotherhood. I can well anticipate and visualise the smile of contempt and disbelief with which this statement of mine will be received. But let me assure the reader that it is not a wild or unpractical statement. My opponent will say that there is no difference of religion in Europe, yet Europe continues to be the biggest battle-field of the world. But he will be pleased to remember that my suggestion is not to have one religion in the world, but no religion whatever. This will facilitate the disappearance of War and the establishment of an Universal Brotherhood. And then again, with the formation of a Federate Asia based on the suggested platform, Europe is bound

to realise the utility and beneficence of giving up God and religion for its own welfare. At any rate, other experiments for the purpose having signally failed (Hague Conference, Geneva Conference &c), this experiment seems certainly well worth the attempt. The sacrifice, if any, is purely sentimental. The profits expected, vastly material.

Count Tolstoi, who was a great thinker of the present age, has preached that the only thing which is calculated to banish War from the face of the globe is the giving effect to the great truth said to have been proclaimed by Christ two thousand years ago, in His Sermon on the Mount, "Resist not evil". Very logically, Tolstoi has laid down that every other effort having been made and found unavailing, humanity, has only this resource left, viz :—to refuse to retaliate, even when oppressed and hard hit by tyrants and oppressor, to avoid War. He has, at least to our mind, convincingly demonstrated the utter fallacy of the doctrine—so familiar to politicians of the latter part of the nineteenth and beginning of the present century, that the best way to prevent War is to be always prepared for it. He has shewn beyond all doubt that this is but the best way to provoke and bring about War. My neighbour is bound to increase his armaments if he finds me doing the same. Well equipped armies and navies and squadrons of fighting aeroplanes &c. will await the first opportunity of plunging into devastating wars, and will create such opportunities, if they are not easily forthcoming.

With the greatest deference, however, to the genius, sagacity and loftiness of purpose of the great Russian political

philosopher, we would most humbly submit that very few nations and individuals in the world would be found ready and willing, to follow the precept "resist not evil", in spite of its inherent and unassailable truth. How difficult it is for ordinary mortals to practise it, has been proved in India during recent years by the palpable failure of the country as a whole to follow the doctrine of non-violence. Perhaps Swaraj would have been attained before the expiry of the period prophesied by Mahatma Gandhi if the whole of India had strictly and literally observed non-violence. Who knows? But it was a foregone conclusion—and we sometimes feel tempted to believe that it was suspected by Mahatmaji himself—that not only the whole of India, but even a considerable majority thereof would never be found spiritually advanced enough to practise it. How many persons, having the physical power to retaliate, can continue to remain quiet in the face of persistent flogging? How many persons of ordinary patience and forbearance can be expected to present their right cheek after being smitten on the left? Yet this is the sum total of the lesson inculcated by the Sermon on the Mount, and Gandhiji's doctrine of non-violence. It really requires moral preparation of the highest order extending through a long series of years—if not generations—to attain such a frame of mind. And so long as that frame of mind is not reached, not only by the advanced few, but by the masses as well, it is hard to expect the abolition of War through the practice either of non-violence or the lesson contained in the Sermon on the Mount. We must once more reiterate our firm con-

viction that it is really by the attainment of the mental state contemplated by the aforesaid two doctrines the abolition of War can be made possible. But before that stage can be reached, it is essential that God and religion shall be given up once for all by men of all shades of opinion. We have no hesitation in affirming that the latter is not so difficult as the former. It is certainly far easier to relinquish one's belief in God than to continue to be passive and cheerful in the face of torture and oppression. Nay, we fully believe that if faced with the two alternatives, an overwhelming majority of our fellow beings would be found to decline God and religion rather than accept flogging without retaliation. That being so, we are of opinion that the giving up of all religious belief and the belief in the existence of God are the only things calculated to bring up men of all countries to that common platform of brotherhood from which they will be in a position to practise the great truth embodied in the three words "Resist not evil" which will ultimately banish war from the face of the globe and bring about Peace and Good-Will instead. Let it be distinctly understood that what we propose, to wit, the giving up of all belief in God and religion cannot be achieved in a moment. It will take years, if not generations. But it is the only way, and certainly worth attempting. God and religion have increased bloodshed and ill-will from the dawn of creation. It is time they make room for other measures calculated to diminish bloodshed and bring about peace and goodwill. Give up God, the rest will be easy.

(c) **Economic Saving.** Though a comparatively minor factor elsewhere, this is by no means so in India. When

we remember the immense amount of money spent year after year in pilgrimages, religious ceremonies, &c., by people of all stations in life, particularly by the poorer classes who cannot afford to have even a square meal per day, we should unfeignedly rejoice at the prospect of their deliverance from this huge and wanton extravagance which would enable them, to spend their hard-earned savings in more desirable objects, into the details of which we need not enter here.

Then again, when we also take into account the fabulous sums invested in religious institutions in different parts of this country and the unworthy objects on which the income accruing therefrom is very often squandered, we cannot but realize at the good which would be caused to the country as a whole if we could secure the spending of these amounts on worthier objects.

Let the available surplus energy of the world, instead of being devoted to the service of non-existent God, be utilized in the Service of Humanity, and let mankind decide once for all to place Humanity on the pedestal hitherto occupied by a non-entity.

(d) **Elevation of Character and Attainment of Mental Peace.** This is also bound to follow. Instead of the puny and timid specimens of humanity which have disgraced the world from time immemorial, especially in the God-ridden countries we can well visualise a race of brave and self-reliant beings who will start with the conviction deeply implanted in their minds that they will have to solve all their own problems without fear or favour from an unknown and mysterious entity, will learn to follow truth for its

own sake without the selfish idea of rewards and punishments in a problematic future state of existence.

Nay, we firmly believe that an individual who disbelieves in the existence of God and a future state of existence can face the prospect of impending dissolution which to him is equivalent to utter annihilation with far more equanimity and self composure than many a pious theist. This has been borne out times without number, and vouched for by unimpeachable evidence. We are not prepared to believe just because Addison is reported to have said so in his death-bed, that Christians die very peacefully and beautifully. Perhaps Addison himself left the world in that enviable frame of mind. But we venture to affirm that his professing the Christian creed had nothing to do with his resignation and equanimity at the of his death. Many well known and pious theists—Christians as well as non-Christians—are known to have shuddered at the bare mention of death, and to have left the world with the greatest dread.

Now, is there anything to wonder at this? In spite of the assurance conveyed to them by their respective religions that they will enter into a state of perpetual bliss after their short sojourn on earth, very few theists are to be met with who really believe in its truth. They have a sort of hazy faith in the correctness of such assurances, and are torn asunder between conflicting emotions, especially in their last moments, as to the fate awaiting them after death. It may be a stage of terrible punishment (and this is generally what they fear the most) extending over an interminably

long period, followed, perhaps, by the enjoyment of pleasures for another long period which again, in its turn, will be the prelude to another incarnation somewhere in some shape or other. Or it may be a long spell of slumber to be followed by a sentence of eternal punishment pronounced by an inexorable divinity on the Day of Judgment, or perhaps utter annihilation. In a word, the poor dying victim is absolutely in the dark as to his future. Stretched on his death-bed, usually after an excruciatingly painful period of agony owing to illness, and divided between hope and fear as to the awful doom which waits him after his breath leaves the body, the death of such a man can be rarely pleasant.

With the real atheist, on the other hand, it is not difficult to imagine that having trained himself in his lifetime by a process of reasoned and intellectual discipline to consider death as inevitable annihilation, pure and simple, and entertaining no doubt as to his ultimate fate, however unpleasant in its aspects, he is more resigned to it, and yields to the

inevitable with more fortitude than the other class of individuals enumerated above.

We, therefore, hold, that on this ground alone, to wit, of being able to leave the world in a better frame of mind, it is more desirable to be an atheist rather than a theist, if it appears that the evidence for and against the existence of a Supreme Being happens to be equally balanced. Atheism, contrary to popular belief, instead of driving us to despair, gives more peace of mind. An atheist knows where he stands, and is sure of his position. The theist does not. He cannot, therefore, enjoy the same peace of mind as the atheist whom he pretends to hate so much.

Let every one of us try to help our neighbour, be it ever so little, without caring for caste, creed or colour, and the millennium will not be long in coming. Such is the closing message of the undersigned.

ANNADAPROSAD CHATTERJEE.

RELIGIOUS BLINDNESS

The will to believe induces in religious people a variety of blindness for which there seems to be no cure. Apparently educated people, whom one would expect to be acquainted with at least the elements of logic, will, with the utmost seriousness, make the most ridiculous statements which will send the non-believer into convulsions of laughter. An amusing illustration is provided by a Marathi monthly called "Dharma-Jagriti" (Religious Awakening) a magazine run

on theosophical lines and edited by Mr. R. S. Bhagvat M.A. of Thana.

The November issue of this magazine contains an article by Mr. Chiplunkar, a theosophist pleader of Akola, which refutes the claims of Hindu orthodoxy that the current orthodox morals of Hindu society are based on ancient Aryan culture. It is a reply to an attack launched by another religious magazine against modern radical opinions, especial-

ly in sex matters, as expressed by some modern writers in others magazines. Mr. Chiplunkar cites evidence from ancient Sanskrit Literature to show that not only all the demands of the new morality were included in Aryan culture, but that in some respects the ancients went far beyond what the moderns claim as moral.

There is evidence to show that even Brahmins in Vedic times ate meat and even beef and drank wine, and people considered very virtuous indulged in gambling, staking not only their property and personal liberty, but even their wives! In fact one of the principal incidents in the "Mahabharata" is the gambling between Dharma, the very incarnation of righteousness, and his cousin and enemy, Duryodhana, in which the former staked all his property and his wife Draupadi, who was also the common wife of his four brothers. He lost everything and his cousin thereupon had Draupadi dragged to the court of his blind father and there tried to denude her in the presence of her five heroic husbands, who could not defend her since she had become the slave of the enemy. A truly edifying story! And it occurs in the same epic which contains the Bhagavadgita, which is supposed to epitomize the Hindu religion. Ultimately Shrikrishna, the propounder of the Bhagavadgita, himself came to the rescue of Draupadi by supplying her with endless garments. The whole Durbar, and apparently Shrikrishna himself took it for granted that the husband had a perfect right to stake her. Is this not on a par with the biblical commandment, not covet your neighbour's wife or cattle? And this same Shrikrishna, according to Mr. C. V. Vaidya, an acknowledged scholar, recited the whole of the Bhagav-

adgita in verse as it now stands, on the field of battle in order to induce Arjuna to fight, when he showed some reluctance to kill his own relatives. Of course being an incarnation of God, it was an easy matter for him to string verses together.

To return to the article in question, it cites the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad which recommends a man to eat the flesh of a bull or a male calf, mixed with rice and ghee if he wished to have a learned son who would be invincible in debate. Both the ancient epics "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata" teem with descriptions of meat-eating in abundance. It was only under Buddhist and Jain influence that Brahmins in some provinces gave up meat altogether and others castes gave up beef. As for wine, the very names "Suras" and "Asuras" given to Gods and demons in Hindu mythology denote that the former drank wine and the latter did not. Krishna's clan and especially his brother were celebrated for love of wine and he himself was not exempt. In fact the Mahabharata gives a description of Krishna, his pupil Arjuna and their wives Satyabhama and Draupadi lying drunk on the same couch! In battle and on festive occasions, these heroes used to get dead drunk. Krishna's clan, the Yadavas, ultimately wrought their own destruction in drunken brawls in which this incarnation of God also took part, and even a religious Marathi poet like Moropant has described this. As for gambling, besides the incident already mentioned, there is the story of another famous King Nala, who staked his all in gambling and was exiled from his kingdom in consequence. Both these gamblers are described as two of the four most virtuous people of their time.

Turning to sex morality, the sage Shvetaketu is mentioned as having created the institution of marriage, so that before this time both sexes enjoyed complete liberty. Even after this, all kinds of sons were recognized as legitimate, because Aryans were in need of numbers and could not afford to leave anybody outside the fold. A son born to an unmarried girl was called "Kanina," which the late Mr. Rajwade interpreted to mean "a son conceived by an unmarried girl from her father." A son born of adultery was recognized and so was a son who was in the womb at marriage. All these were recognized as sons and heirs in different degrees. At present only a legitimate or an adopted son is recognized and still the orthodox claim that Hindu morality is unchangeable. If two people cohabited without any ceremony, simply because they liked each other, that was also called a 'marriage' by the Gandharva form, merely a trick to legalize it. This was the case of Shakuntala, whose story is famous, and any number of others. There were also plenty of cases of brother-and-sister marriages, periodical marriages, extra-marital relations, the famous "Niyoga", which meant getting children from somebody else in case they were impossible from the husband for any reason. Aryan wives welcomed holy guests by receiving them into their beds. There is one story in particular which in itself is sufficient to explode the claim of the ancients to any kind of morality. The famous Rishi "Vishwamitra" had a pupil named Galava, who wished to give him 800 horses of a special type in return for his teaching. So he started to beg for these (begging is perfectly honourable for Brahmans). He went to King Yayati, who had no horses to give him, but gave his daughter instead, saying that he could

easily get the horses by trading upon her charms. So Galava took the daughter to another King, asking for 800 horses in exchange. This King could only give him 200 of the type he wanted, so he promised to return the girl after she had given him a son. Now this girl had received a boon which made her a virgin again after every son was born. So he took this remade virgin to another king and then another and each time received 200 horses and took back the virgin after she had given a son to each. This made only 600 horses and he was told that no more of that type were to be found anywhere. So he took the 600 horses and the girl and asked his Guru to accept the girl in lieu of the deficit. To this Guru agreed and begot a son by her. The first three sons became kings after their fathers! Under the present law, Galava would be prosecuted for living on the earnings of prostitution.

All these stories are well-known. What I want to point out is the mentality revealed by the editorial comments on this article, which only cites recognized books often cited by the orthodox for their own purposes. The editor prefers to juggle with these authorities rather than admit that Krishna, the incarnation of God, could have got drunk. This is what he says: "We agree with Mr. Chiplunkar that common people in ancient times indulged in immoral practices, but that does not mean that high-souled individuals like Krishna who reformed society by setting them an example were themselves immoral. It is certainly wrong to say that Shrikrishna was addicted to wine. The Mahabharata was a small work at first and was edited and added to at different times to make the present epic of that name. Different

readings are found in different editions. So it cannot be considered an accurate history of all that occurred at that time. Besides it is a poem and poets are free to insert imaginary stories. So the poets who added to the Mahabharata from time to time must have to put in their own ideas of morals. If a poet belongs to a society which does not consider drinking immoral, and says that Shrikrishna drank, that cannot be accepted as true. One can only infer that the poet and his contemporaries did not think it bad for a good man to drink. Christian writers say that Christ drank. Buddhist books relate that Buddha himself, who taught 'Ahimsa' (non-killing) to the world, died of indigestion caused by eating boar's flesh. Even God is described as cruel in many books. But it is quite impossible that these stories can be true. It is a contradiction in terms to say that Shrikrishna, who taught Bhagvadgita to the world, who showed Arjuna his 'Vishvarupa' (showed the whole world as contained himself), who had attained the highest knowledge and the final stage of evolution was addicted to wine." Mr. Bhagwat also stresses the fact that scholars are inclined to believe that the popular idea of Shrikrishna is made up by combining the lives of three distinct persons of that name. In the case of Shakuntala, he gives the puerile defence that she was married. If mutual consent constitutes marriage, any man is married to any woman, provided they like each other. As for Aryan hostesses receiving guests into their beds, he pretends that Rishis can never have accept-

ed this kind of homage, since they were great men! How they can it be called a custom of all? It is by this kind of subterfuge that orthodoxy tries to smother everything that they do not like. It is very convenient to say that any portion of the epic which you do not approve of is a later addition and must be imaginary. In that case, why is any portion of it to be believed at all, and especially the Bhagvadgita itself, which forms a part of it? Mr. Bhagwat must know that different editions of this last differ even in the number of stanzas they contain. Some authorities put the number of original stanzas at 94, some at 700, some at 718 and others at 745. Who is to be believed? Other people's ideas about Shrikrishna are not to be accepted, because they conform to their ideas of morality. Why then is Mr. Bhagwat's picture of Shrikrishna to be accepted, since it obviously conforms to his ideas of morals? Christian writers on Christ and Buddhist writers on Buddha are not to be believed, because Mr. Bhagwat thinks it impossible for Christ to have drunk or Buddha to have eaten meat, when as a matter of fact, wine forms an essential part of a Christian religious ceremony, and it is very well known that the only restriction placed by Buddha on his followers (Bhikshus) was not to let meat be specially prepared for them, but allowed them to partake of meat already prepared! Theosophy accepts all religions, so all the prophets must have been vegetarians and teetotallers to please Mr. Bhagwat!

R. D. KARVE.

"THE FUTURE OF RELIGION."

"Knowledge for the sake of Knowledge" is an old principle professed and followed by every wise man of the past and the present. Such prominent personalities of our time as Mahatma Gandhi and Sir Oliver Lodge stick to the same principle today. But how many Gandhis and Lodges are there today upon the surface of this planet? Perhaps the number of such persons is negligible. The majority of the people does not acquire knowledge *for its own sake because most of them* are preoccupied with the affairs of their daily bread and know that by so doing they will not be able to fill their hungry stomachs; and a bare minority which can afford to do so, not only for itself but for others as well, is too overfed and selfish to take trouble for "such trivial things." Therefore, keeping these facts in view it seems quite futile to enter into any discussions regarding the necessity and origin of religion in the past. At present, the aim of all knowledge is to promote the happiness of mankind. We do or learn a thing for what we gain from it; we weigh everything in terms of material advantage it is capable of yielding to us, and discard that which is otherwise. Applying this formula to religion we get a big round zero as the result. We observe that religion is not capable of yielding any material advantage to us, and, moreover, it can never be made to do so unless its meaning should be twisted into some far-fetched beyond the popular understanding.

To any ordinary mind, free from religious bigotry, religion is nothing but a number of dogmatic principles heaped up together in a haphazard manner. It is totally devoid of logic and sound reason-

ing, and the element of fear is predominant in it. It imposes restrictions on mankind with the fear of some supernatural being—so erroneously termed God—which looks over the acts of every single individual and governs the destiny of man. It sings of this supernatural being in a very high strain, and crowns it as the sole arbiter of the universe. Religion presents to us this supernatural being as a magnified image of man together with all his sentiments and emotions. It tells us to follow a definite code of morality, but does not explain its hows and whys; and accuses of heresy to any one who dares to question its absolute validity. It promises ample rewards to those who will live according to the moral principle laid down by it, and warns them of the horrible punishments they shall incur if gone otherwise. It speaks of itself as perfect in all respects, and incapable of any alterations and adjustments, whatsoever, with the changes in the environment of mankind. Religion, therefore is a full-stop to human progress. (At this place I must add that Buddhism has nothing of this sort, hence it is not a religion).

Now let us review the foregoing facts in the light of Science—the most accurate instrument of finding the truth known to this day. The existence of a supernatural being is not tangible with the scientific knowledge, hence its nonentity is confirmed. There is, of course, evidence for the existence of a universal law, but none of that of any such supernatural being as God. Henceforth I shall write God (with big g) when used in a religious sense, and god (with small g) when in scientific; and refer to them as "He"

and "it", respectively.

Science breaks up every material substance into molecules (of compounds and elements), into atoms, and atoms into protons and electrons. It fathoms into the nature of them and tells us that they are waves in æther. Aether, as yet, has but only a theoretical importance. Even if æther be isolated tomorrow, what beyond it? This is quite unknown and this unknown you may call god, or whatever else you please. It can very well be said that something new may be discovered the day after tomorrow. But will the discovery of this "something new" put an end to research? Nay, it is impossible for there is no end to research, since there always remains something yet so be discovered. Science defies god as something which stretches beyond the limits of known in to the infinite unknown. It can neither deny the existence of god to day, nor ever in future.

So much for the science of Physics, and then comes Psychology—the science of human mind. Psychology is the greatest enemy of religion and has done it irreparable loss. It has exploded each and every doctrine of religion, and this is why so many religious fanatics of today are so much afraid of the explanations of psychologists like William James and Sigmund Freud, and so vehemently oppose them. "God is the creation of man and man is the creation of God" is a famous may be notorious—psychological paradox, but a little thinking will reveal its truth. Who came to tell mankind that God exists. Nobody but man. Who said that God created mankind? The answer is man, again. Then, in the name of common sense, what is God but man's own creation and who else is there but man who says God created me? Psychology traces out

the element of fear in the backbone of religion; and this the very foundation on which the Temple of Religion stands is illusory and sure to give way one day or the other. It has altogether changed our conception of morality today. In psychology there is nothing like religious morality, but ethical morality of course, there is. Fear of punishment and temptation of reward after death, are responsible for religious morality, while a sound reasoning mind is the stronghold of ethical morality. To quote the words of the well-known English author, Mr. H. G. Wells, "We have no use for blind faith today. We think of cleanliness instead of purity, and health instead of chastity". (See "Illustrated Weekly of India", Feb, 4, 1934). Indeed, if one refrains from sexual promiscuity for some other reason than of endangering physical health—the loss of which must ultimately result in social disintegration, one is bound to turn into a terrible pest to society sooner or later. Such persons being enemies of society, are simply to be abhorred and get rid of as soon as possible.

Psychologically there is no criterion of good and evil. The goodness and badness of our actions is judged by the convention and common acceptance of the society. As the great Poet Shakespeare has truly said, "There is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so". But somebody may challenge the accuracy of this statement, and say, "What about conscience, the god-given power to guide our actions"? Before answering this question let me put it into a better form, that is "What about conscience which is born in man to guide his actions"? Thus modifying it we come face to face with another important question whether conscience, as popularly known, is born or made. The answer is

simple and shall be given by a counter question. Why does a certain section of people shudder at the very idea of pork, and another at that of beef, while a third one enjoys both of these diets without feeling the slightest prick of its conscience? Whence came the difference in the reactions of these three sections of people cited here? Obviously it is due to the difference of their sense of good and bad that is conscience. The three sections of people are brought up in three different kinds of atmosphere of belief and behaviour. Hence conscience, as popularly understood, is made and never born. Examples can be multiplied likewise to prove that, but I think this one will be sufficient. Thus the question of "its being born in man to guide his actions" is clearly fallacious.

Taking out the element of conscience from religion, there remains to be discussed only the fear of punishment and temptation of reward after death. But the modern researches in the field of human evolution has robbed the poor religious fanatics of the last hope of going to heaven. They clearly point that the soul does not exist, as an entity and there is no life after death in the sense in which religion presents it. When a man dies he ceases to be, and the cellular death takes place in the pyre or the grave. Even if we suppose that each cell in man has a soul of its own, then a man cannot have a single soul but a lot of souls. From this it is also obvious that the reincarnation or the continuance of individual personality of man as a whole, as maintained by certain forms of religion, is impossible. Hence a scientific person need not worry about any such speculation.

Although the realization of these facts concerning religion has been much re-

tarded by the existing superstition, prejudice, selfishness, and something like a hereditary desire for the revival of what is wrongfully known as "good old days," the world is gradually beginning to accept them. The West has realized the hollowness of religion and is trying to abolish it. Russia has openly started an anti-religion propaganda and much good will come out of this. Turkey has advanced rapidly in this direction under the direction of that admirable political genius, Kemal Pasha. In Britain and nearly all the European countries such anti-religious or rationalist organisations have been established and are gathering more and more enthusiastic adherents every day. India the most wretched and superstitious country, has also a rationalist organisation of its own. The Indian Rationalist Association has brightened up like a sun amidst the darkness of ignorance, and although many blood-hounds have been set upon it, it has gained sufficient power to muzzle them.

World circumstances will gradually open the eyes of every thinking being all over the world to the truth that maximum happiness can only be gained through unselfishness, which depends on oneness of thought, and the oneness of thought implies a complete eradication of all the current forms of religion from the surface of the earth. If peace and happiness are ever to come, religion must go. To attain universal brotherhood, the world must free itself from the shackles of religion. Many people foolishly hold that religion teaches Love. In truth, it is just the opposite of love. It is the cause of hatred, the most bitter hatred between man and man. Anybody who has any doubt with regard to this statement should read the history of

European Renaissance and the days of Papal Inquisition, and have a look at the present condition of India. Then he will realize the truth of statement.

As scientific education advances, more and more centres of Rationalism will be formed, which some day will unite in one whole to combat religion. What will remain will be a certain code based on ethical standards evolved by circumstances, compelling this reasonable

animal, that is man, to guide his conduct in such a way as to attain the greatest happiness for the largest numbers. The end of religion is coming, and the very thought of it will vanish from the human mind, once and for ever. There shall be no religion but the religion (if you are so reluctant to abolish the word altogether) of rationalism in future.

AGRA.

A. A. KHAN USMANI.

[We admire the optimism of our correspondent, though we do not share it. Ignorance is still too deep-rooted in the world for people to give up their cherished superstitions for rationalism.]

ED. REASON.]

THE KORAN—WHAT DOES IT TEACH ?

As I am writing this article, I imagine some of my friends pitying me, thinking I am heading straight to Hell, others smiling at the 'foolish thing' who tries to show off as an ultra modernist. "But no", says the Bhendi Bazar Musalman, "God is going to burn you in Hell, but we are not going to leave you in peace here".

First of all, I shall try and deal with the chief dogma of Islam, viz., the Divine Revelation of the Quran. The other dogmas are Unity of God, The Immortality of the Soul, predestination, a Last Judgment, and Heaven and Hell, etc.

It is said that the Koran has existed from eternity and will exist for ever. (Ch. 56, V. 76, and Ch. 85, V. 22). It was brought done by Gabriel on different occasions and was revealed to Mohomed and was written down by his friends and assistants. If the Koran has existed from eternity, the world is surely of a later date and the events described in that book

ought to be in future tense but they are all in past tense.

"The text", says Rodwell in his Preface to the Koran, "assumes the form of a most unreadable and incongruous patch-work"; "un assemblage", says M. Kasimirski in his preface, "informe et incoherent de preceptes moraux, religieux, civils et politiques, meles d'exhortations, de promesses et de menaces".

The Koran, we are told, is a divine revelation. But in fact it is a book full of threats of hell to infidels and bribes of a sensual paradise to the pious believers. It is full of contradictions and repetitions. The subjects are taken haphazardly. It seems God must be having the limited knowledge of an Arab author and editor who existed thirteen centuries ago. There are about two hundred contradictions in the Koran.

We are told (in Ch. 32, V. 4) that the length of the day of judgment will be

one thousand years and (in Ch. 70, V. 4) fifty thousand years. In Ch. 55, V. 13, etc., man is said to have been created out of clay. In Ch. 3, V. 52, he is created out of dust, in Ch. 96, V. 2, out of clots of blood and in Ch. 24, V. 44, it is given that all animals are created out of water (that is, men also), and many others.

Gibbon says in his History (Vol; 9, Ch 50). The Koran is "an endless incoherent rhapsody of fable, and precept, and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea which sometimes crawls in the dust and is sometimes lost in the clouds. The divine attributes exalt the fancy of the Arabian missionary; but loftiest strains must yield to the sublime simplicity of the book of Job, composed in a remote age, in the same country, and in the same language. If the composition of the Koran exceed the faculties of a man, to what superior intelligence should we ascribe the Iliad of Homer, or the Philippics of Demosthenes?

The Koran is supposed to be an original revelation, but most of its fables are taken from Biblical and Rabbinical sources which in their turn can be traced back to Essenism, Mithraism, etc.,

Many of the things taken from these sources are mistakenly stated. Rodwell says in his 'Koran' page 385 (sura III) that Mohamed supposed Imran or Amran to be the father of the Virgin Mary (sura CIX LXVI. 12)—Mary and Elizabeth to be sisters who, with Jesus, John and Zacharies, make up the family of Imran. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Mohamed is guilty of the anachronism of confounding Miriam with the Virgin Mary.

The Koran does not mention anything that an ordinary man of Mohamed's time was not aware of.

The Koran's account of creation is entirely fantastic. It is really surprising to find God selecting Arabic as his medium of instruction—a language whose characters were invented as late as at the end of sixth century and even today very few people know the language. Why should God send a revelation to Arabia and to ignorant Arabs when Greece was the seat of learning and Greek was more widely spoken? Are we to suppose that god wanted the Arabs alone in heaven and he wanted to damn the rest of the world or are we to suppose that the Koran was a human creation and was intended for the Arabs only?

The Koran sanctions slavery, polygamy, and concubinage. It bribes believers with a sensual heaven where "Aye blooming youth go round about to them with goblets and ewers and a cup of flowing wine" (Ch. 56, V. 17-18) and "theirs (believers), shall be the Houries, with large dark eyes like pearls hidden in their shells (Ch. 56, V. 23). "Of a rare creation have we created the Houries and we have made them ever virgins, dear to their spouses, equal age with them", (Ch. 56, V. 35-38 for the believers.

"In shades of bridal couches reclining, they and their spouses" (Ch. 35, V. 57). There, in Paradise, are "rivers of water, which corrupt not; rivers of milk, whose taste changeth not; and rivers of wine, delicious to those who quaff it" (Ch. 47, V. 16-17).

It threatens the infidels with eternal hell. "They shalt be inmates of fire, to abide there in eternity", (Ch. 3, V. 112.)

"Those who disbelieve our signs we will cast into fire"; so oft as their shall be well burnt, we will change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the torment" (Ch. 4, V. 59).

"Many, moreover, of the Djinn and men have we created for Hell" (Ch. 7, V. 178). In this case men are Djinn are created for Hell and yet they are held responsible for their actions. According to Islam all our actions are determined by God and yet men are held responsible for their doings and sent to Heaven and Hell.

"Hell is before him (unbeliever) and of tainted water shall he be made to drink". "He shall sup it and scarce swallow it for loathing, and death shall assail him on every side, but he shall not die; and before him shall be seen a grievous torment" (Ch. 14, V. 19-20).

The infidels will be "amid pestilential winds and in scalding water and in the shadow of the black smoke, not cool, and horrid to behold. For they, truly, were blessed with worldly goods, but persisted in heinous sin, and were wont to say," What, after we have died, and become dust and bones, raised? And our fathers, the men of yore?" Say: Aye, the former and the latter gathered shall they all be for the time of a known day. Then ye, O ye the erring, the gain saying shall surely eat of the tree Ex-Zakkoam, and fill your bellies with it, and thereupon shall ye drink boiling water and ye shall drunk as the thirsty camel drinketh (Ch. 56, V. 42-56). Now we exactly know how merciful is God, the all merciful.

Following are the examples of democracy and brotherhood of Islam:—

"And when sacred months are passed, y

kill those who join other gods with God wherever you shall find them; and seize them, besiege them, and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush; but if they shall convert and observe prayer, and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way, for God is gracious, merciful, (Ch. 9, V. 5. What an example of tolerance: I think this sentence has caused rivers of blood to flow and it has reddened the pages of history, under the hands of Taimurlane and Aurangzeb and other Mohomedan Emperors.

"When ye encounter the infidels strike off their heads till ye have made a great slaughter among them, and of the rest make fast the fetters" (Ch. 49, V. 7). This is what they called tolerance, brotherhood and democracy.

Here's one more:—

"When the Lord spake unto the angels, I will be with you; therefore establish ye the faithful, I will cast a dread into the hearts of the infidels; strike off their heads and strike off from them every finger tip" (Ch. 8, V. 12).

Many Mohomedans claim that Islam is the only religion giving equal rights to both the sexes. It is a pure fallacy. A Mohomedan husband can divorce his wife without giving any reason whatsoever. While woman is male pollution and a property. "They will also question thee as to the course of women. Say: they are a pollution. Separate yourselves therefore from women and approach them not, until they are cleansed, etc" (Ch. 2, V. 222). "Your wives are your fields: go in, therefore, to your fields as ye, will, etc." (Ch. 2, V. 223).

But chide those for whose refractories

e have cause to fear; remove them into

beds apart, and scourge them", (Ch. 4, V. 38).

The Koran also gives the account of the creation of Universe in 6 days, creation of 7 Earths in 2 days and tries to prove the resurrection by rain and sun that die every night and resurrected every morning!

In short, most of the Mohomedans know the topography, geography, geology, chemistry, and physics of the "other world", but as far as this world is concerned they are three to four hundred years in arrears.

The Koran does contain many good things, but it only gives us the idea of the

psychology of the Arabs, and the only rational conclusion that we can draw from it, is that the Koran is purely a human creation.

The Mohomedans have one chief God and many angels, and polytheists have also a chief God and many smaller gods to help him; the only difference is in name, some called them angels and other the gods.

Allah of Islam is very much like Jehovah of the Jews and Brahmah of the Hindus. After all, what is there in a man!

IMA REBEL.

THE RATIONALIST YOUTH LEAGUE.

This League has been formed by some young members of the Association with same objects as the R. A. I. and with the desire of working in co-operation with the Rationalist Association of India.

The membership of the League is open to any person under the age of twenty-five, and the annual subscription is a minimum of Rs. 1/-. We gather that the membership is rapidly increasing and we request all those young men and women who are interested in Rationalism to

write to the Secretary of the Rationalist Youth League, Fanaswala Building, Block A, Room 59, Sankli Street, Byculla, Bombay.

The League holds monthly meetings with lectures and discussion classes. It is circulating rationalistic literature free of charge and is having a small circulating library amongst its young members and is doing wonderfully useful work ever since it has been started. It can be commended to anybody who wants to study Rationalism.

BIRTH CONTROL WILL REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY

Lord Horder says It will have Immensely Valuable Results.

Lord Horder, one of the most famous doctors of the day, declares he believes birth-control to be the most important of all the activities which will eventually help us in regard to the preservation of human life and happiness. He was speaking at a dinner of the National Birth-Control Association, of which he is President, held here to raise funds for the Association. It was later announced that £1,000 had been subscribed.

Birth-control was an important factor in such problems as Eugenics, material mortality, infant welfare and the voluntary sterilisation of the unfit. "I cannot escape the conviction," he said, "that in the proper spacing of children and the elimination of the unwanted child, lies not only the easiest, but the most effective contribution to preventive medicine and social betterment."

When maternal mortality was discussed it was all very well to censure the doctor or the nurse. "Surely the question of the fitness of the mother to bear her child is a very important factor," said Lord Horder. "I think myself it is the

most important factor in this question of maternal mortality."

He was interested in the voluntary sterilisation of the unfit. They would get that in time, no doubt. But what would they have achieved? The unfit were only a few thousands in number. Better birth-control among the millions of the normal population would have immensely valuable results.

The Countess of Limerick said that birth-control was no longer regarded as a sort of indecent quackery, but had passed into the sphere of preventive medicine. It was to be hoped that birth-control clinics would soon be recognised by the State. Birth-control did not mean the prevention but the proper spacing of births. It stood for wise parenthood.

Sir Patrick Hastings, K.C., urged that every doctor and every hospital ought to study and advocate the subject. The real trouble was not to educate the poor women in the use of birth-control, but to educate the rich doctors to produce a perfect method.

[In England influential and learned people such as Lord Horder, The Countess of Limerick and Sir Patrick Hastings K. C. advocate birth-control. Here in India, bigoted priests and their ignorant followers condemn it. (Ed. Reason.)]

A LECTURE AT THE RATIONALIST YOUTH LEAGUE.

A lecture was delivered by Mr. Megherian (Editor: Cavalcade) on "Rationalism" under the auspices of the Rationalist Youth League on Saturday 15th December at the Students' Brotherhood Hall, Bombay. A short summary is given below.

In the beginning the speaker proceeded to clear all the wrong ideas which existed among many people. He said that Rationalism was supposed to be *consisting of dogmas, but that this is not a fact.* "Rationalism is simply and purely an attitude that a person takes towards the existing superstitions, beliefs and customs."

Rationalists claimed the right of freedom of thought in religious and other subjects and extended the same right to others, for, it would be quite irrational to deny a right to others while one claimed it for himself.

He further stated that in his opinion the attitude of all the prophets of the past such as Christ, Mahomed, Guru Nanak and others has been Rationalistic. They have fought against the ideas and superstitions that existed during their times, e.g. Mahomed said that he had come in the world in order to destroy the foolish superstitions of the idolators. "Which Rationalist would say anything better than Guru Nanak when he said, the best duty of a man is the search for Truth, or Christ who condemned those who have eyes but refuse to see, and ears yet refuse to hear?" They have played their part as Rationalists according to their time.

He went on to say: "The whole moral attitude of Rationalism can be summed up in one single word and that word is Tolerance". It is necessary to take into

account the question of degree. Rationalists held that there was no greater immorality than forced morality. Rationalism is the highest moral attitude.

It is not by fighting that we will gain our ends but by being tolerant.

Reason should be also the thing that governs the politics of the world. Rationalism has no direct bearing on politics. Rationalism is political in the sense that it may effect the existing political schools of thought. It undoubtedly effects the political situation of a country because if the new generation grows up with the ideals of Rationalism i.e. Reason and Tolerance then there will be no difference between a Hindu, a Mahomedan and a Christian. The greatest bond of unity between humans beings is Reason.

The speaker during his lecture incidentally referred to the propaganda that was being carried on by some wicked persons who tried to connect the Rationalist Association of India with Moscow. He emphatically refuted the allegation and declared that the Rationalist Association of India and the Rationalist Youth League had no connection whatsoever with any political party inside or outside India as mentioned in the last clause of the constitution of the Rationalist Youth League. The Association consisted of members belonging to altogether different political schools of thought.

After the lecture the lecturer invited any questions which the audience might like to ask. Some questions were asked and answered by the lecturer although they had no direct bearing on the subject of the lecture.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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No. 1

CONTENTS

	Page.		Page.
Notes and Happenings	1	The Breeding of Men by Paul G. Espinosse	16
Does God Listen to Prayer by C. L. D'Avoine	5	Science and God by Chapman Cohen	12
Evolution and the Grebds by M. V. V. K. Rangachari	9		

Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, The Editor "Reason," 3, Morland Road, Byculla, Bombay. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India, 41, Queen's Road, Bombay 2.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

Some time ago, a little boy named Ryan, aged 10 years, appeared as a witness before Judge Foster in Melbourne, Australia. After the administration of the oath, the usual question was put to the child:—"Do you know what will happen to you if you tell a lie?" "I shall go to Hell," replied the boy. The

Judge said that he did not like such a question to be put to the child. Addressing the child, he said: "Hell does not exist, my boy, you must not be frightened of that, you must speak the truth as a good and truthful boy." The Judge further remarked that children should not be frightened with the threat of Hell

as it was a pernicious doctrine; he, himself, never teaches his children about Hell and he was glad to say they were well-behaved children.

As soon as this was published, there was immediately a hue and cry from bishops, priests and parsons. They denounced this plain speaking Judge everywhere and said that Australia would soon become a den of iniquity if the fear of Hell was removed from the people. Nothing could be a better proof that priests depend on Fear to keep people in religion—a most despicable method, to say the least against it.

One is glad to note, according to the Australian paper, that many sensible people cordially agreed with the Judge and condemned the teaching of Hell. According to "The Star," an Australian paper, the mother of the boy agreed with the views of the Judge. "I think the Judge was right", she said. "I do not believe in hell myself and I have never talked of it to my children. I want my children to grow up Christians and decent citizens, but they can be all that without having ideas put in their heads that fill them with fear."

Dr. R. S. Ellery, a well-known Australian psychologist, also strongly condemned the teaching of Hell to children and quite agreed with the Judge. "It was psychologically wrong," said Dr. Ellery, "to plant the seeds of fear in the mind of a child whether to induce good conduct or not." Dr. Ellery rightly said that credulity was a main characteristic of the child mind, and much happiness depended on security and love given by parents to whom the child looked for truth. "A child," said Dr. Ellery, "might be put to sleep by threats which produced fear, but the effects later in life might produce

neurotic disorders. These ailments, including the various phobias, fear of open or closed spaces, and so on—could be traced often to such causes."

It is also the opinion of many eminent scientists that fear tends to disorganize the nervous system. Yet, it is on Fear that most religious teachers depend to make people moral! Who can doubt that the many wretched specimens of Humanity one sees about are not the victims of individuals besotted and demoralized by such teaching as eternal punishment.

It is also the opinion of many thinkers that Fear makes people religious and this is the reason why religion does not teach self-reliance, independance, manliness, courage and self-defence. Religion tends to make people abject and grovel in the dust. In the threat of Hell and the torments of Purgatory, the priest has not only a powerful weapon to cow down people, but an inexhaustible bank from which he can draw as he likes. The Church of Rome, for instance, became financially very strong the moment it discovered the doctrine of Purgatory. Consider what this doctrine means to that Church. Thousands of the faithful are daily in pitiful dread of the fate of their dear departed ones. Priests assure these credulous people that their dear ones must undergo the torments of unquenchable fire in Purgatory before they are admitted in Paradise. Prayers and Masses (which must be paid for) are indispensable to hasten their delivery from such a place. These deluded people gladly pay for these masses which are said in thousands daily all over the world! If people were to disbelieve this infamous, heartless, and horrible doctrine tomorrow, that Church would suddenly be deprived of its greatest source of revenue. It is

easy to understand why the Church of Rome insists on that doctrine. The average Catholic is always haunted by the fear of death. Small wonder! The dread of the Devil and the fires of Purgatory seldom make his last moment a serene and tranquil one.

* * *

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the poet, a hundred years ago said :—"Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in a thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist." This was said a hundred years ago when an Atheist was looked upon as more than a criminal. Even today, in benighted quarters, people think it is an awful thing to be an Atheist. It matters not whether you believe in Jehovah as a God or Jesus, Allah, Ahura-Mazda, Vishnu, Shiva, Mulungu, Atanattoo, Dharamooloon and what not, they say that belief in some imaginary ruler of the universe is better than no belief at all. The priest and the politician between themselves have conspired to make men believe in some invisible ruler so that they may have a greater hold on the masses. It is written that man will always be the dupe of his own stupidity.

* * *

When three fools are gathered together a charlatan is sure to be in the midst of them. True to the tradition of the priestly caste, which is always hostile to modern ways, the Mahomedan priests of South Africa during the last Ramzan festival objected to the notification of the appearance of the new moon by telephone or telegraph. The papers say :—"At the beginning of January, true believers in Durban anxiously scanned the sky for the slim crescent which betokened the end of the month's fast, but the sky was over-

cast. It would appear that the moon was seen at Johannesburg and the telephone lines soon buzzed and the telegraphs clicked with the good news, but the priests declined to accept such news and the Durban Muslims had to continue their fast another day while their co-religionists in Johannesburg were able to accept the testimony of a clear sky."

To make their authority on such a subject more binding and sacred, a conference was immediately held during which the opinion of Mahomedans from India was quoted, the priests decreed that a person must communicate the news personally after seeing the moon with his own eyes and bring a reliable witness with him. These worthy Mahomedan priests evidently still believe that the moon, after all, may play false and may not appear when it is due! They must see it to believe that it is still in the sky! The faithful, of course, will bow down to this solemn decree, for how can ordinary mortals question the wisdom of sacred priests who are in daily contact with the Ruler of the universe?

* * *

A Belgian Commercial Court has decided against a well-known religious order named "The Trappists" which trades in Beer. It would appear that a brewer adopted the trade mark "Trappist" and the religious order immediately sought an injunction to restrain the rival brewery from adopting such a well-known mark. The Court decided that the Trappists were an associate body not for purposes of profit, and that their ideal was to live according to the precepts of St. Benedict (to scorn money and to live a life of poverty), to do charitable work, etc. The Trappists were ordered to pay the cost of the action as they were not traders, and could not object to or complain of competition. Most of the religi-

ous orders on the Continent have become powerfully rich in liquor or spirit trade—Benedictine and Chartreuse, for instance, are manufactured by monks—The Benedictine monks also trade in a well-known Dentifrice known as “Dentifrice du Dr. Pierre.” In popular beliefs, monks are considered to be very poor people whose aim in life is to do charitable work while they themselves must beg for their living while they are limping towards heaven.

* * *

An English parson was very sarcastic about the enterprise of the British Broadcasting Company to broadcast religion. (The B. B. C., in effect, is making a powerful propaganda in favour of religion much to the disgust of very many in England). “You cannot broadcast a soul,” said the Rev. Dr. Dixon. “Neither can you broadcast a soul’s highest aspiration—and that is prayer.” He assures his people that “though words of prayer may be spoken into a microphone, yet the Almighty God is not to be regarded as listen-in to the loud speaker. Neither can one imagine him as a humble eavesdropper, curious to hear what a speaker says to the microphone.” If God has ears he must surely hear prayers whether these are addressed as litanies, or sung as “God save the King.” He may not care for a microphone which is, of course, a modern invention, but to all appearance he must be terribly interested in the bleating voice of the parson when his prayer for the congregation soars heavenwards. Has Dr. Dixon a faint suspicion that God has suddenly become deaf?

* * *

Another miracle in India! After the bleeding Bull of Travancore, a bleeding idol has been discovered as Jandialla

Sherkhan, a village near Sheikhpura. The wonder of it is that the idol was located in the trunk of a peepul tree belonging to a Brahmin named Gulab Dass. This pious man of God was in want of money and he sold the tree to a Muslim for Rs. 22. As soon as the latter cut down the tree, the idol suddenly dropped out to the great consternation of all present. It had a blood-red stain on its neck and had also a **tilak** mark on the forehead. The Brahmin is stricken with grief over this and is repentant of his awful sin for having sold that sacred tree. The Muslim is also in trouble. His son who cut down the tree is down with high fever and he now fears the worst calamity. It is now a question of appeasing the offended goddess and surely a poor goat in the corner will lose its life over the dreadful affair!

* * *

Our readers who have to go down by the Hornby Vellard at night had better be careful. The Evening News of India announced some time ago that the place is haunted. It relates the story of one of its correspondents who had a weird experience with a ghost there. “Recently” writes the correspondent, “I was driving into Bombay after midnight, when it seemed that an ice-cold wave enveloped me and though I am not a hyper-sensitive person, and view all occult matters with suspended judgment, (which means that already the correspondent must have had experience of “occult matters”) I must confess I felt a pair of ice-cold, invisible hands grip my wrists and deliberately turn the steering-wheel of my car towards the footpath. What is more, I had blue bruise (sic) marks on my wrists next morning.”

The correspondent goes on to relate that he had great difficulty in keeping the

car from mounting the footpath. He said that he had the same experience on two previous occasions at the same spot, and it would appear that some of his friends went through the same experience at the same place.

One wonders what these unfortunate people must have done to this ghost who is evidently determined to pick a bone with them. One also wonders whether these people are Catholics of Bandra. If they are, they ought not to be afraid of a ghost who plays such silly pranks, or, as a matter of that, a crowd of any kind of ghosts. After all, it is a spiritual privilege to live in Bandra which is a hallowed place on this side of India. Its residents must, indeed, be under the special protection of all the saints of heaven, even of the "King of Kings" himself. If they cannot trust so many celestial protectors, the present writer would suggest a potent remedy.

Carry a flask of fresh Holy Water especially consecrated in one of the Holy Churches of Bandra, and vigorously sprinkle the ghost with the same as soon as it makes its appearance. The effect of Holy Water on ghosts is really marvelous. They shriek and bolt away as if a regiment of cuirassiers were after them. For Mohomedans there is a *taviz* sold at Mahim which is also very efficacious.

* * *

It is really distressing to hear the constant lamentations of the East Indians of Salsette in the newspapers. They attribute all their shortcomings, ignorance and backwardness to ignorant priests who hold sway over them, and to remedy this they clamour for more priests, nuns and seminaries! It is possible to become besotted for various reasons but this really is the extreme limit. Little wonder that Bandra, the capital of Salsette, is proclaimed as the most pious town in India.

DOES GOD LISTEN TO PRAYER?

The Revd. Dr. Dixon, an English clergyman, recently made a strong protest against the religious propaganda of the British Broadcasting Company which, it would appear, insists on fostering religious discourses on an unwilling public, much to take the disgust of many who rightly disapprove of such a thing.

"You cannot broadcast a prayer", said derisively the Revd. Dr. Dixon, (see "Notes and Happenings" in this issue). He does not believe that God is an eavesdropper listening to prayers much like a servant girl would listen to conversation behind the door. Dr. Dixon particularly dislikes the micro-phone.

The Revd. Dr. must have caused a good deal of indignation and surprise in the religious world for the Devil knows what he was driving at. If he believes that God is a living person, there is no reason why he should hold that he does not listen to petitions addressed to him. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to understand how God can answer prayers if he does not listen to them. Perhaps Dr. Dixon attaches a different meaning to the word "prayer" than is universally understood. Prayer, according to the dictionary, is a solemn petition addressed to God or any object of worship. It may take the form of a prescribed for-

mula, as is laid down in most prayer books, as for instance the 'Pater Noster' or the obligatory prayer which every Moslem is expected to repeat five times a day. It may be also an improvised composition recited loudly or silently. A prayer may be said mentally or sung; but in whatever form it is said, it is always a petition which is addressed to God. Even when done mechanically as when the Thibetian monk unrolls his prayer wheel, he mentally thinks of the long prayer which he expects the Almighty to hear. Similarly does a Brahmin when he repeats his interminably long Mantra. Even the repetition of the word "Om" a thousand times is a sort of praise which is believed to be very pleasing to the ear of the Almighty.

To judge by the enormous volume of prayers addressed to God daily, it is reasonable to expect that a good deal of his time is occupied in listening to the prayers of his people and adjudicate according to their merit. It is true that certain creeds in the performance of their rites and ceremonies do give one the impression that they believe their god to be deaf; hence they beat big drums, ring bells and beat cymbals in a manner to drive people, who are not used to such noises, temporarily insane. But the very fact of making such dreadful noises implies that they are meant to attract the attention of God in case he may be engaged on some other business. He is, therefore, presumed to hear what is said to him.

If Dr. Dixon is right that God does not listen to prayer as is popularly believed, believers would think it a waste of time addressing any petition to him. But Dr. Dixon is wrong. All creeds teach that God does hear prayer and

grant the request of those that he thinks are worthy of his grace and favours. All priests insist that it is so. When Christ and other religious founders taught the people to pray and exhorted them to do so as the most profitable thing that they can do, they certainly believed that God listens attentively to the prayers addressed to him. Christ distinctly said:—"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you." In the Lord's prayer, for instance, the import is clear. After paying the usual compliment to God and uttering the usual praise which evidently God insists from every creature, the petitioner asks for certain favours.—He asks to be provided with his daily bread which God who is the Dispenser of all things is most likely to withhold unless asked for; he asks God to save him from the temptation of the Evil One and to forgive his sins. If Dr. Dixon is right, all this is pure waste of time.

The pictures of heaven given by different creeds all show that the principal occupation in heaven is to hear prayers and to grant or refuse the favours asked for, as the case may be. The Angels and the Saints round the Throne of God are constantly praying for the salvation and happiness of those of their favourites on Earth and those who are undergoing purification by fire in Purgatory. Petitions from here are incessantly arriving and graces and favours dispatched by return post, and, doubtless, the celestial telegraph office has a tremendous lot of business to cope with daily. The Christian pictures of Heaven are very suggestive. Though the scenes presented by the Protestant sects differ somewhat from the picturesque ones given by Catholics, (pictures of heaven can be seen in many Catholic homes) all of them agree that

in the Court of Heaven, God is very keen on the prayers of his people and that he is terribly offended when they neglect this important duty. (Priests, as a matter of fact, always attribute all the calamities we experience in this world to our sinful neglect of praying and putting all our faith in God). This is the reason why the Protestants, like the Catholics, in fact all believers in God believe in the efficacy of prayer. The Protestants, generally, address their prayers directly to God, often through his Son, but they do not trust this important duty to the Virgin and the Saints as the Catholics mostly do. Whatever may be the channel through which the prayers of the Protestants are directed, it is certain that God must be receiving a considerable volume of the same from those quarters. If we were to believe the Catholics, God may not be so busy. The Catholics, in effect, assert that God does not bother himself with the prayer of anybody except the Catholics. He simply ignores the prayers of those who do not belong to the true Church—which is the Roman Catholic Church—and there is an end to it. Be that as it may. The Catholics alone, if their contention is true, must be keeping heaven terribly busy, and one wonders whether God can attend to anything else except giving his best attention to their petitions. Let us imagine for a moment what, according to the Catholic notion of Heaven, must be the scene up there. God the Father is seated very sedately on a throne of ivory and gold, looking very grave and rather worried. On his right hand is seated his only Son, co-eternal with him. On his left hand is that Mysterious Being—The Holy Ghost—also co-eternal with the Father and the Son. The Three form the Court of Heaven. Behind the divine

throne is a colossal cross resplendent with glory and scintillating with countless precious gems. The glory of God is reflected as pure dazzling white clouds and the shining light is too overpowering for mortal eyes to contemplate. Numberless Cherubims and Seraphims hover round, many of them carrying crowns and festoons of beautiful flowers—roses and lilies are in profusion. Archangels are in close attendance and many well known Popes and Saints bask in the divine effulgence. The Virgin Mary is seated at the foot of the throne. Her smile is gracious and on her countenance shines kindness itself. The twelve Apostles are provided with seats of honour; the solemnity of the scene is most impressive. The Saints take precedence according to their rank and sanctity. All are in the attitude of the deepest reverence and respect. Some well-known Saints—St. Peter, St. Francis Xavier, St. George, St. Patrick and St. Iago are not found near the divine throne. Their duties call them elsewhere. St. Peter is at the gates of Heaven, the keys of which he holds. He must be there to keenly scrutinize the new arrivals who are constantly pouring in. St. Francis Xavier is busy at the celestial India Office where he spends anxious times. It is said in heaven that he is very dissatisfied with the paucity of converts in India. He cannot get over his sorrows that Old Goa is now in ruins. St. Iago is in tears over the apostasy of Spain. Other Saints also attend to various duties. But the busiest person in heaven is really the Holy Virgin to whom the bulk of the prayers and petitions are addressed. Just imagine the crushing duties of the Holy Mother of God. She must appeal constantly to God on behalf of her children on Earth and also for the souls in Purgatory. She is often ques-

tioned about the favours she asks for and at times she has to plead hard in favour of her proteges. To her also is allotted the task of watching over the last moment of the faithful, and together, with all her other duties she has hardly time to do anything else but to intercede and pray for all who repose their confidence in her. God the Son also receive many petitions, but the only one who has an easy time in Heaven is the Holy Ghost. His services are only required to enlighten the Pope and to guide the Militant Church in times of trouble. After this, it is simply ridiculous to say that God does not listen to prayers. Praying is indeed the constant occupation of the inmates of heaven. Some think that there is also plenty of recreation. Possibly so. The elect must surely sing the praise of the Almighty with the accompaniment of the harp and other amenities must have been devised to spend ETERNITY pleasantly. They say that souls do not and cannot suffer from ennui in heaven. We must, however, strongly discourage the belief of some sensual and simple-minded people that there are plenty of material comforts there. Heaven is essentially a spiritual place. There are certainly no mountains of Vindaloo, rivers of beer or lakes of George Alfred brandy up there. Other creeds also are emphatic on the necessity of prayer. The Muslim assure us that Allah insists on it. Praying five times a day, as we all know, is a religious obligation with the Muslims. In Heaven the Mahomedan Saints, like the Catholic, spend their time in praying for the faithful on Earth, and for the glory of Islam.

Allah, they say, though very stern, is always merciful. They do not think that the Mahomedan heaven is a dull place as some Christians assert. It is true that there is no harp playing and no singing in that heaven. Allah dislikes music, but the Mahomedan Paradise has been described by many as a most pleasant place. Everywhere are cool and shady places. Rivers of sparkling water, milk and sherbet flow in all directions. Trees bearing delicious fruits and gardens full of sweet flowers, are plentiful and the happy souls have a glorious time all round.

The Zorastrians also say that their Heaven is an abode of prayer. Ahura-Mazda, surrounded by Farishtas, longs to hear the beautiful prayers which, said in that archaic language, soften his heart. Those who were charitable on earth, who did good work, performed good deeds and uttered good thoughts, have a grand time in heaven. They and the Farishtas often have grand concerts, the sweet music of which is of a kind that can only be heard in heaven. Is it necessary to multiply the cases of the universal belief in prayer? Dr. Dixon is refuted by all the known creeds. We think his sneer is due not to his belief that God does not listen to prayer, but to his inveterate dislike of that new modern invention—the microphone. Just as the Muslims of South Africa dislike the telephone and the telegraph and will have none of them, the Revd. Dixon abhors the microphone, hence his apparent heresy.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

EVOLUTION AND THE CREEDS.

History repeats itself, and the cycles of its rotation are no less true in religious than on the political side of civilised life. The attitude of the Fundamentalists of America towards the teaching of the Darwinian Theory is merely illustrative of the deeper problem involved in questioning the hard realities of biological existence. A few years ago, a school-master of the Dayton School, Tennessee, was penalised for making his pupils acquainted with the law of Evolution. Modern science, has however placed the principle on a firm footing, and it is unlikely, that attempts will be made in more advanced countries, e. g., in Europe to controvert the main outlines of the theory, although paleontological finds since the publication of the "Origin of Species" (1857) and the improved technique of scientific investigation may have filled in some of the gaps, explained a still larger number of facts, and helped in the main to reach a more comprehensive truth. The reproach that there are several theories of evolution is thus ill-founded, when it is only remembered that scientific truth is rather in the nature of an ever-expanding *process* than an accomplished fact of religious certitude, to be believed in implicitly on pain of losing one's soul on default. It is curious that the myriad-tongued faiths once delivered unto our fathers should seek to point at the differences among scientists as proof of the assailability of the Laws of Science. Natural law is no more than the mere generalised statement of the phenomena of nature, and as such the scientist is entitled to examine at each step the statement of the Law, and improve its expression so

as to accord better with further discovery and research. He is not concerned with maintaining any theory and putting it forth for truth at all cost. The modifications of scientific principles are in fact the strength, rather than the weak-point in the history of the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

The vested interests of the historical religions of the world, on the other hand, oblige their votaries to seal their brains against all conflicting doctrines. They tell the masses that the ills of the world are illusory. There are balances drawn on their accounts in an unseen world hereafter. Recompense in an after-life for the deeds of this one. Consolations resting on perverted psychologies, and ample rewards promised freely for no merit greater than mere conformity, this in general may be said to be the method of action of the creeds.

And to help to distract attention from the things of the world, what may better be expected to accomplish than the mystical, idealist stand illustrated in the Vedanta. "We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep" wrote Shakespeare. "Avyaktadini bhutani, vyakta madhyani Bharata, Avyakta nidhananyeva tatraka paridevana" so sings the Gita (II, 28): Beings are indistinguishable in origin, and alike in their dissolution, but are manifested in the middle state, why then lament, O, Bharata? On the principle that nothing can be conceived as having an existence, which is non-existent in the beginning and the end, Shankara reasons out the non-existence (*Asat*) of the material universe from the very circumstance of its being 'rounded with

sleep' in its beginning and in the end. As there may be nothing which may come out of nothing and revert to nothing in the end, the universe dissolves itself into an unreality. Brahman is the one reality, and all else is Vivarta, mere illusion. The logic is incontrovertible, and the conclusion is irresistible that emancipation consists in the acquisition of knowledge, that dispells the Maya, the enveloping ignorance, that is the root cause of the idea of seperateness, of distinction apart from the all-pervading Paramatma, the Supreme Brahman.

The process of this emancipation is mainly individualistic, depending upon the competency achieved by each being, the fitness (adhikara) resulting from appropriate successive stages of spiritual experience and exercise (Sadhana). In the West, the poetry of Shelly and Wordsworth, and the teaching of Carlyle and Emerson are the brilliant petals in the flower of Idealism. Plato had constructed for ancient Greece an Ideal Universe, and the philosophies of Leibnitz and Kant maintain the position. The categories are themselves immutable, and duty is supra-rational for Kant as much as it is emphasized in the Bhagavad-Gita (Dharma). A stern disregard for the actualities of life, a turning away from its forces of attraction and repulsion, (Raga and Dvesha) characterises the illusionist school that in successive centuries, and under diverse skies, has been advocating consistently the removal of the human foot from off the ground. The fight in the air is yet to be successfully accomplished.

There is something in the very idea of evolution which is opposed to the dram-philosophy of idealism. Evolution takes up the universe as a fact to be under-

stood, subject-matter to grapple with, not to be brushed aside as Vivarta (illusion) as Shankara did. It is a reality awaiting explanation and more full of promise of human emancipation provided we understand its forces aright and marshal them to advantage. The division is thus seen to be sharp and fundamental, and it depends upon whether we recognise the world as a force for good and evil, or whether we close our eyes upon it and are satisfied that it is *Asat*, unreality, an illusion, and a dream. Religions have often tried to soothe the suffering humanity by preaching Vairagya (dispassion) and meekly did the race turn its face away from the splendours of religious privilege in the hope that magnificent cathedrals and soft-cushioned armchairs are awaiting their arrival elsewhere. The monk and the Sannyasi, and the performer of the Yegna (sacrifice) and austerities rejoice in the hope that the ultimate home in the heaven is peopled with celestial nymphs and ambrosial dainties. It is the psychology of personal satisfaction all the same.

I am aware of another branch of the Vedanta-philosophy which does not rest its oars on illusion, which in fact follows up the principle of Evolution (parinama-vada). Ramanuja had developed this system based upon the pre-existing commentaries of Bodhayana of the original Brahma Sutras of Vyasa or Badarayana. It rests on the supposition that the universe is an *amsa* (fraction) of the *Sat*, the Real, Suprema, Narayana. An attempt at practical sociological regeneration seems to have been seriously made since the time of Sankara, and we may understand the teaching of Ramanuj in that light. If anything, the emphasis laid on devotion, religious and social, and

the extension of the right to spiritual knowledge to women and the lower orders of society, and the collectivisation and equidistribution of rations in the temple-centres and Mutts, point to the practical, temporal attention that religious life permitted itself since his time. In their traditions, (Sampradaya) the followers of Ramanuja, the Shri Vaishnavaites, do not take offence in having included Tiruppani Alwar, (who was said to have been born, a Pariah, out-caste) among their twelve apostles. Again that Bandit—saint (Tirumangai Alwar) that waylaid the rich in order to feed the poor is also among the twelve, a symbol perhaps that ordinary notions of robbery and property are relative to existing orders of society. The tradition associated with his name is suggestive of the latest experiments in economic readjustment. Linked to those Dravidian seers, Ramanuja developed the sociological faith in the equality of all castes for spiritual redemption, and the possibility of lifting up human life amid the stern realities of the world of mixed good and evil.

Although the school of Ramanuja did not wipe out physical existence as an illusion, and although the principle of evolution (Purinama) is expressly relied on, it cannot be supposed that the tendencies of modern scientific thought are fully comprised in the credal forms of the earlier centuries. True, an admission of a reality of the world is to some extent traceable in the Visistadwaita system. But it would be boldness to assert that any form of religion turns the face completely away from the other world. No prophet or preacher of faith may afford to remain a secular sociologist. The attempt at the well-ordering of society may be there

but it is never unmixed with the religious background. Ramanuja may be a good Religio-Sociologist and a benefactor of the community during his day, but the usual fossilisation of all credal forms did not stay its hand among his followers. It is the curse of all dogma that it carries within it the seed of its own corruption. And religion as the upholder of dogma may never free itself from the taint. Religious history the world over attests the truth. To rely upon the prospect of betterment in the life-beyond, as the mainspring for human morality, is the all-too-common practice among the creeds ever designed for man. An ultra-mundane motive for Ethicism is the common feature of all cults except perhaps the rationalist teaching of the Buddha.

There is something in the Vaishnava scheme of redemption comparable to the Christian conception of final Beatitude. The soul evolves to divine altitudes, and approaches very nearly the Godhead, has all the insignia, in every respect resembling God, but not completely merged in it. This state of final release, Moksha, is an eschatological invention, superimposed upon the known processes of evolution through fertile imagination. To the scientific mind, to envisage a *final state* for evolution would be incomprehensible. Evolution is simply a process, which can neither be understood in terms of the beginning, nor the end, the final stage. It is our Moha or imagination that would project either on to it. Given the final perfected state, as a preconceived or conceivable end, the whole gamut of evolution fades out into the simple slavish march to the destined goal. The existence of diverse values, of varied instances, and of relative perfection through exercise and experiment,

all these will have been totally excluded, were we to presume the shaping of the world to a predetermined plan. Modern science has demonstrated the weakness of the teleological argument, and Paley's watch is seldom relied upon in contemporary philosophy. If there is a plan, why not work it out even now? And if the plan was worked out already, why did not the universe come to an end? Further, it is derogatory to omnipotence to think that there are ideals and plans to work out. The existence of failures, of evil, of suffering, and of nature that is red in tooth and claw,

points to the probable absence of pre-conceived design.

Evolution attempts the naturalistic explanation of the order revealed in the disordered world, and the creeds that seek to chain human faith to an after-world will have found their occupation gone when it comes to be universally acted upon. It is no accident, therefore, that religion in whatever form sees the enemy in the theory started by Darwin.

Cocanada, 15-1--1935.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

SCIENCE AND GOD.

One does not like to say very hard things about Sir Ambrose Fleming. He is a very old man (born 1840) with a mental make-up that was already old-fashioned when he was a youth. But he has for many years been the ideal scientist of such bodies as the Christian Evidence Society and that type of religious believer whose avidity for the incredible can be satisfied only because of his tremendous lack of appreciation of the possible. Sir Ambrose Fleming is known, I think, on account of his work in physics (although he is not in the front rank of physicists) but this is not the cause of popularity with Christians. The thing that endears him to the Daytonville type of believer is that every now and again he breaks forth into a statement of religious beliefs of which most educated Christians are now ashamed. And about this there is one thing worth noting. These pitiable out-

bursts make news. They are good copy. Newspapers ever ready to sacrifice to the great God Circulation, find that there are a sufficient number of people to whom such things are taken as scientific because they are uttered by a man who is called a scientist. Bernard Shaw is fond of saying that scientific men form another kind of priesthood, and like so many of the things that Mr. Shaw says, the saying is striking rather than profound. Scientists make no priestly pretensions; but because the mass of the people have not outgrown the religious stage, they are inclined to transfer to the scientist the qualities which have become discredited when attached to the priest. So, to masses of people, anything that is said by a man in the name of science becomes a part of science, whether it is scientific or not. The utterances of Sir Lodge on a future life is quoted as "what science says" on that

subject. The hopelessly unscientific statements of Sir James Jeans on the significance of certain scientific hypothesis is the "testimony of science to the truth of religion"; and so on, in instance after instance. The fact is that the proportion of the population which, while repudiating many or all of the specific dogmas of Christianity are still hopelessly religious in their mental make-up, is much larger than is generally believed.

Evolution or Nothing.

The newspaper followed their usual rule in giving prominence to the speech of Sir Ambrose Fleming at the Victoria Institute. But it is a pity that Professor Elliot Smith and Sir Arthur Keith treated the speech as seriously as they did. It leads uninformed people to imagine that the hypothesis of evolution is in doubt in scientific circles, or that anything is to be said in favour of the super-naturalism of Sir Ambrose Fleming. The latter spoke as though there was any theory to prefer in contradiction to the hypothesis that the human organism is a development from the general world of animal life. If the latter assumption is not likely to be true, what other theory is? Can any one seriously imagine that man came into the world fully formed, springing from nothing and with no relation to what had gone before? Yet that is the only possible alternative to evolution. But, presumably it is the former theory that Sir Ambrose has in mind when he says "The origin of man is to be looked for in the creative power of a self-conscious Creator, and Supreme Intelligence and Will," if such a conglomeration of words could mean anything at all. Lacking a definite meaning, consider what it implies. Countless forms of animal life existed, but not man. And then, suddenly, without the slightest

warning or preparation, or connexion with anything that had gone before, man, fully formed, came into existence, instantaneously manufactured by a "self-conscious," etc. etc., Reduce the statement of Sir Ambrose to plain terms, show it in its undisguised unintelligibility, and its absurdity should be clear to any brain above the moronic index. Sir Ambrose says, with the air of one announcing a discovery to an astonished and an admiring world, that "evolution" explains nothing. No one but a fool ever thought that the world, by itself, did. Neither does gravitation, as a mere word explain the movements of particles of matter. It is what the word stands for, the descriptive formula of which the word is an index that is important. Evolution is built upon the fact that this world is a world of constant change, just as the world of matter was a world of motion before Galileo and Newton. And just as Newton gave a demonstration of the way in which particles of matter behaved, and so was able to formulate a law of gravitation, so in a world of living beings evolution tries to formulate a law that will describe the changes that take place in that world and the organic relationship existing between all the members of the group. The fact of evolution, that is, a relation between living forms of different species, is unmistakable. The fact that varieties can be created, is no longer a question of theory, but a knowledge of fact, since man has created and can create many varieties. Whether the Darwinian theory which was never more than an endeavour to explain an accepted fact, or some other theory, or Darwinism plus some other theory will provide the material for a "law" to be framed, are questions that have no bearing whatever on the fact of

evolution. As Huxley said, long ago, the facts of embryology alone are enough to demonstrate the fact that evolution is a fact. There is no other hypothesis in the field. Prior to the conception of evolution, men really had no theory of the origin of man and animals. Men were then like so many Fetish worshippers mouthing theosophical litanies before the object of their obfuscation.

Perfection in Folly.

But as in the Bible the Lord created everything perfect after its kind, so this speech of Sir Ambrose Fleming might be taken as an illustration of perfect fooling on a scientific topic. Consider the following. "We cannot" he says "dismiss the belief in Jesus creating instantly shoals of fish in a lake where no fish were found just before," or his ability to "create bread and fish instantly to feed large multitudes," or to "create wine out of water." Why must we not refuse to believe things? Why, because Jesus raised himself from the dead! I do not know a finer passage in the whole history of humorous literature. I agree that if anyone can swallow the story that Jesus raised himself from the dead, then there is no reason why he should not be able to eat the fish that were created in shoals in a fishless lake, and wash them down with the finest wine that had been made from the purest water -- and nothing else. The truth of the Jesuine miracles is shown by the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Well, a man who rose from the dead should be able to create wine out of water, and bread and fishes out of nothing at all. The evidence is devastating in its sweep.

From chemical and fishy marvels we advance to a criticism of scientific beliefs. We cannot, says this "eminent scientist,"

"believe in the great antiquity of man because if we allowed only a doubling of the population in 300 years, and if man had existed 9000 years ago, the progeny of a single pair would have multiplied into 1,000,000,000 pairs of human beings. The human race would by now have filled up the whole world," given the scientific estimate of the antiquity of man. We suggest to Sir Ambrose that he should tackle the problem of explaining why the herring, which with its possible capacity for breeding could pack the Atlantic solid in a century or two, does not do so. It is also interesting to be told that, as we can initiate and create things, there is "nothing incredible in the idea that the Supreme intelligence and Will of Diety.....should be able to create, not merely atomic matter and energy, but also living matter in organic forms." Again, devastating! If man can create things from existing materials, why cannot an array of capital letters create things from nothing at all? I am not surprised to find that Sir Ambrose met with an "enthusiastic reception" from the audience, which the Daily Telegraph notes contained many clergymen and students—probably of the theological variety. Outside the Institute a brother in the spirit to Sir Ambrose was found in the person of Father Vincent MacNab, who remarked that "The theory of evolution in biological matters is of some practical utility for purposes of classification. As an explanation of origins it has never been more than a glorious guess." Bless the man! The theory of evolution uses classifications, and if accepted determines some classifications, but it cannot be used for classifications unless it is first accepted, at least provisionally. A classification determined by evolution, involves an

acceptance of evolution. Father MacNab is; apparently, willing to accept evolution as true while denouncing it as false. But that position should not be puzzling to a Roman Catholic priest.

Agreeing with Both Sides.

It is curious to find a paper such as the *Church Times* expressing regrets that Sir Ambrose should have "suggested that the doctrine of evolution is inconsistent with the Christian Faith,"—But that in the one point on which Sir Ambrose Fleming is right. The *Church Times* backs up its regrets by saying that "The great majority of English Catholics accept evolution as the divine method." This evidence against Sir Ambrose is unconvincing. Large numbers of Christians are now ready to accept anything, and they have become so accustomed to reject anything, that they are prepared to accept everything that they once rejected—so long as the same phrases are used. But if we are to believe in a God who can create everything by a mere fiat, what need is there of evolution? Development exists, not because it is, even conceivably, the best way of achievement, but because it is the only way. But what is the use or the wisdom of development, if the desired end can be reached without it. Where could be the wisdom of going through all the stages that have given us the motor-car or the aeroplane if the perfect motor-car and aeroplane could be made without all these intermediate steps? Evolution or no evolution man can be seen, as a species, working his way slowly from stage to stage, each stage marked by a number of blunders and cruelties and stupidities. What is the wisdom or the good of all

this, if God can make shoals of fishes out of nothing, and can create whatever he wishes by a mere exercise of his power? It cannot be for the benefit of those who have suffered and fallen by the way, for each generation trends its own path, reaps the penalties of its own blunders, and leaves it as an experience from which a succeeding generation may benefit; and the next generation commits blunders of its own for which it has to pay a price similar to that paid by its predecessor. If the Christian God exists, then all this weary, painful process is absolutely unnecessary. Perfection might have been achieved at the outset. But it was not. Like some omnipotent vivisectioner God preferred experiments, and experiments that were not forced upon him because of the necessity for finding out, so that the benefits of the acquired knowledge could be passed on to others, but from sheer love of seeing his helpless victims squirm and struggle and die with their work unfinished, and their desires unrealized.

I think Sir Ambrose Fleming is right. You cannot reconcile Christianity with evolution. But I also think that the *Church Times* is right. A large number of Christians do profess belief in both God and evolution. But that is because a great number of Christians nowadays are not quite sure what they believe. They quite believe that a rose, call it what you may, will smell as sweet as ever. But somehow they have confused this with a belief that you have only to call a shunk a rose-bush, and the animal will fill its vicinity with the loveliest of perfumes.

CHAPMAN COHEN.
in the *Freethinker*.

THE BREEDING OF MEN,

"Of all the variety of possible human relationships there is one which we all experience at least from one side — the relationship of parent and child. While this relationship has in literature been treated for a considerable period in terms of sentimentality or disgust according to the intimate circumstances of the writer, it is only rather lately that it has been treated in a numerical way. It may be of interest, therefore, to consider in quite general terms some of the notions which come to people who think about this relation in this way." So writes, Paul G. Espinance, in the Nineteenth Century. "People thus engaged are in a particularly happy situation if they enjoy trouble, as they can be practically certain of offending somebody's ideas of propriety every time they open their mouths. For genetics, whatever may be its shortcomings, at least makes two suggestions about men and women. It inevitably irritates the more sloppy of theorists by remarking that all men are not equal, and proceeds to enrage people of the opposite turn of mind by suggesting that their inequalities are perhaps in kind, and certainly in distribution, by no means all that their ideal could wish. One of the inequalities which engages the attention of the inquiring geneticist when contemplating mankind is an inequality in fertility. It is difficult to observe the generation of living things without noticing that, on the whole, the relation between parent and child is one of similarity. Not least among the achievements of the last fifty years has been the perception that while this similarity is often masked it is none the less real; that such things as the colour of one's hair behave through a series of generations as genetic

particulars whose identity may be hidden but whose persistence is the persistence of life.

It is this conception of genetic particulars, this particulate theory of heredity, which has superseded the older idea of an heredity whose mechanism permitted the blending of the inherited factors as the mechanism of environment permits a blending of their expression in an animal, a plant or a man. When pink flowers are produced by crossing red and white strains, the blend is the result of modified expression of two factors, red and white, which keep their integrity and which can be recovered as good as new to give successive generations of flowers as red and as white as their ancestors. The degree of our fertility can be profitably considered as a characteristic dependent upon genetic particulars just as can the colour of our eyes or the colour of a flower. The number of children which each of us will have before we die depends at this moment upon many things, but one of these things is the set of genetic peculiarities which we have physically received from our parents. Time and chance happeneth to all men, but all men do not present time and chance with the same stuff to fashion.

This fact of the heritable nature of fertility has most curious and interesting consequences among us, because man has adopted one of at least two possible methods of forming a closely-knit society. There are in Nature two chief kinds of community, two great plans upon which a society of individuals can work. One large and very successful group of animals (the insects) have adopted one plan and we have adopted the other. The

difference between these two plans is a difference between the kinds of provision they make for the relation between parent and child. In the insects — for instance, among the bees and ants — parenthood has been commonly divorced from other activities and concentrated in a few individuals while the rest of the work of the community is done by the remainder. In most other gregarious animals — for instance, in man — this has not been done and everybody has a chance of both jobs. It is just this distinction which seems to have escaped the sociologist who addressed to people of a less objectionable metabolic tempo than his own the advice: 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise'. He does not seem to have realised that a great many of the activities of an ant in a society where sexual processes are concentrated in a special caste are quite inappropriate to a reformed sluggard in a society where they are not. In the case of the ant the amount of work she does or the amount of luck she has, and the resulting respect of destination in which she is held in the community, will have no effect whatever on the contribution she will make to the genetic composition of future generations of the community. Whatever happens she will make none. In man, on the contrary, the more reformed the sluggard, the more sterile he becomes.

The civilisation of the bees, therefore so long as the reproductive caste remains sufficiently fertile to replace wastage, is potentially stable. The civilisation of man, so long as what that civilisation holds up as virtues are accompanied by infertility, is not. While it is by no means clear that the stability of man's civilisation is the greatest possible good on any cosmic sort of scale, yet as we are all men and rather civilised it may be of

interest to inquire further about the nature of this instability. In a society where individual effort is rewarded by individual gain, and which has the institution of hereditary wealth, successful persons very soon find that they can have a better time themselves and give their children a better time and a better start in life if those children are few than if they are many. *This will be less pressing* a matter in the world which is rapidly expanding, as was the world of the last century, than in a world which is rapidly shutting up, as is our world to-day. It is perfectly obvious that infertility is at this moment in England very closely associated indeed with a safe position and a high degree of comfort. In cold fact, people from the skilled artisan classes upward have fewer children than the quite unskilled. This may easily be seen by looking at such figures, for instance as those given by Carr Saunders, at the World Population Conference at Geneva in 1927. He cites the position in the railway community. Here, within this single industry, is a microcosm showing just this tendency. If a standard of fertility be taken as 100, then it is found that officials and clerks have a fertility of 78; enginedrivers, guards and signalmen 91 to 98; pointsmen, 98; gangers, labourers and porters, 101 to 109.

These figures show very clearly the relation between a good position and low fertility. There is not nearly such good evidence that a poorer social position is always related so closely with a very high degree of fertility. This is very important to remember. It was usual not so long ago to suggest that humanity or at least Western civilisation, was sliding headlong to destruction and was being swallowed up in a mass of physical and mental inferiority. These

mournful prognostications should be taken with reserve. Some of them, at least, were based upon statistics whose significance was not properly understood. Having avoided the pitfalls which beset the path of the scaremonger, we are, however, left with the inescapable conclusion that a good position is linked with low fertility.

Now this seems to come about in two distinct modes; either as an immediate concomitant of these people's physiological make-up or by the design of normally fertile people. For the geneticist the difference between these two alternative modes is much less important than might be thought at first glance. As an example of the first mode we may remark on what happens when a man marries an heiress. This is one of the quickest and safest ways up the social ladder in western Europe and America. But what are its biological consequences? Simply that this man (and incidentally the sense that made him marry the girl) is removed from large-scale parenthood. The heiress comes of an infertile family. If she has brothers and sisters she would not be an heiress. She will have few children, and any she has will tend to be infertile. This strikingly simple point was first made by Francis Galton in 1892. He noticed that though the average age at which the judges in England married was very late, yet they had quite large families. From this he concluded that their potential fertility must be very high. Nevertheless, it could easily be shown that those judges who attained to the peerage did not confer any degree of immortality on the lines they founded. It was here that the heiress appeared. As the judge's daughter-in-law, she brought money to support the title and sterility to bring it to an end.

In the second mode a man may deliberately avoid children from fear, from dislike of the inconveniences entailed, from a lack of faith in the future, or because he is unwilling to sacrifice his motor car or the pictures on Saturday night. It is fashionable to call this selfishness; the idea, apparently, being that the unselfish man would consider the desire of the unborn to be born before the desire of the born to be removed from reality on cinemas or from life in collisions. People of this turn of mind will have few children, any that they do have will be, on the whole, like them. This is what is meant by saying that society is always dying away at the top.

Since the continuance of any society depends upon a constant supply of recruits to replace the wastage of death, it is obvious that the character of the population of the future depends upon the character of that part of the present population which will be the parents of the future. In the case of man the future population is not produced by a small insulated caste as it is in bees, and neither is it produced by that section of community which displays those peculiarities which the community, rightly or wrongly, holds out as admirable. It will be produced by the great mass of wholly undistinguished people—by 'the unassuming cuss in the corner of the 'bus' and not by you and me. It is because of this inconsistency between those peculiarities which society holds out as admirable, and those which genetically it encourages, that society is unstable. It cannot indefinitely survive unchanged the constant procession through itself of the peculiarities which it rewards, up to the top and out into oblivion.

Having seen, then, that the future lies with the children of the great mass at present young, let us examine their character. Now, the character of this mass has changed. It has changed very perceptibly indeed during the last century or so an exceedingly short time, to the geneticist. To understand the nature and extent and meaning of these change it may be well to glance for a moment at the kind mechanism which seems to keep many animal populations more or less stable.

Animal populations are often kept to a reasonable size, and within their food supply, not by the direct action of starvation, but by the operation of disease and enemies. Suppose you put two healthy rabbits on a small island and let them breed, they will go on increasing until one rabbit eats the last blade of grass, and then they will all die. If, on the other hand, the original pair were infected with tape-worm (as nearly all rabbits are) as the rabbit population goes up, so will go up the chances of any tape-worm egg finding itself on the blade of grass eaten by a rabbit. Therefore the tape-worm population will go up too. When the rabbit population gets very thick, but not so thick that there is no grass for either rabbit or tape-worm, the tape-worm population will be so large that older rabbits will be so heavily infected that they will begin to die. As the rabbit population thus falls, the chances of any tape-worm egg surviving will fall with it, and the tape-worms will get fewer. This will send the rabbit population up, so equilibrium will be reached. A population depends upon its enemies, its diseases, and its parasites to keep it within its food supply. While there is free competition for mates and food

these factors will ensure that the population consists of individuals adequate to deal with them—reasonably immune to disease and reasonably good at evading enemies or beating them.

During the last century competition has not been free within man's society. To an ever-increasing extent the operation of disease and the efforts of enemies have been diverted. The automatic check on the reproduction of types not able to fend for themselves has been removed. The mechanism which keeps a society stable has been thrown completely out of gear. The result seems certain; a period of change will follow. While this much seems clear, it is by no means so easy to be sure of the nature of that change. Human breeding is so slow that many years must elapse before the full results of any experiment such as Western civilisation can be read. However, a few general tendencies can be seen even now.

Of the undesirable characteristic which have been thought likely to rise in incidence as a result of the removal of the checks perhaps mental deficiency has been the most thoroughly canvassed. At various times it has been suggested that the rise in this set of conditions might be so great as to threaten our very existence. A Committee has recently reported upon this, and their Report provides material for a good deal of sobering reflection. Incidentally, it may serve very well as an example to show how careful it is necessary to be in interpreting statistics. Various investigators have reported that of mental defectives only perhaps about 5 per cent. have defective parents. The opponents of all forms of sterilisation at once took this as proof that mental deficiency was not inherited to

any considerable degree. Not so the Committee. On attacking the problem from the other end, and determining the proportion of the children of defectives who were themselves defective (much more easily done, as the parents were known and the children too young to escape), the following important observations were made :

Excluding the cases classified as 'unascertained', i. e., about whom no definite information was available, there were 1802 children between seven and thirteen, of whom 30.5, or 16.9 per cent., were classified as defective and 423, or 23.5 per cent., as retarded. Only 21, or 1.2 per cent., were superior. In the second group, children over thirteen, out of a total of 1848 the number of defectives were 599, or 32.4 per cent., and of retarded, 240, or 13 per cent. Only 10, or .5 per cent., were superior. The higher proportion of defectives as compared with retarded children in this group seven to thirteen who were classed as retarded will later be found to be defective. Taking the two classes together, we find that in the first group 40.4 per cent. of the children still living were mentally subnormal, and in the other thirteen group the percentage had risen to 45.5 per cent. When it is remembered that 22.5 per cent. had already died and that these percentages apply to the survivors, the figures indicate that here we have a social problem calling urgently for some practical preventive measure.

This is the reasoned, careful conclusion of a Committee of competent people who had studied the whole question. They have succeeded in bringing some measure of clarity into a situation clouded by every kind of prejudice. They received reports and memoranda from all the

sources likely to be of help, and heard in evidence everybody who had knowledge to place before them. The difficulties they met with are well shown by their statement that four local authorities reported to them that they had no record of any mental defective having had a child ! It is to be hoped that the publicity given to this will have its effect. The Committee, as is well known, recommended that, with all possible precautions, sterilisation should be carried out by consent upon certain classes of mental defectives, upon sufferers from certain diseases, and upon those persons, normal themselves, whose children were extremely likely to show these conditions.

This recommendation is of the greatest importance. It recognises that from the point of view of the race the evil of a social disability resides largely in its heritability. Mental disability is a social disability, and some forms of it are certainly inherited. Racially this disability can be robbed of its evil power if its inheritance can be checked. Mental deficiency without fertility ceases to be a racial evil. And intelligence and a sense of responsibility without fertility cease to be a racial good. Fertility can be separated from mental deficiency by sterilisation. It remains to restore fertility to intelligence. While selection can be dodged within a community, selection is not mocked. It simply changes the unit on which it operates. Within a community all the virtues can be practised but if their practice changes the character of the future members of the community in such a way as to destroy their power of combating the common enemies, then that civilisation is doomed in competition with rival structures. The golden rule 'Do as you would be done by' can only

be practised within a ring kept by its non-observance.

The tragedy of our civilisation, then, seems to lie in this—that as at present constituted it allows Nature to take vengeance on it in the future for those acts of its members in the present which it thinks worthy of reward. One may perhaps ask if this must be so. It has been so in the past, it is so now; but must it be so in the future? Very little can be said about this, for very little is known. Our interest in it is purely academic—we are going to die before it matters. As an academic subject it may perhaps be worth while trying to imagine a society which would not contain the inherent instability of ours. The problem resolves itself into this: Can inadequacy and fertility be separated, and can adequacy and infertility be separated? The fatalistic view that they cannot seems to rest on one doubtful assumption and to overlook one possibility.

This possibility is that we may gain a degree of conscious control over the consequences of our sexual processes which would completely change the situation. It is probable that within the next ten years, and nearly certain that within the next hundred years, the production of children will be almost at will, and that the exercise of that will will not be at the cost, in money, in convenience, or in happiness which is its price to-day. Real knowledge of the physiology of the menstrual cycle will almost certainly bring with it a degree of possible control which will make the realisation of pregnancy voluntary. This knowledge is being gained in the face of great opposition. This branch of biology has been held back for years by the conscious and unconscious acts of

organisations which see their monopoly threatened and their position endangered. When the knowledge is won its application will be bitterly opposed by the same interests, and only then will the real battle between superstition and knowledge begin. Unlike the conflict between the knowledge of Galileo and the superstition of his world, this battle will be fought, not in the remote spheres of astronomy, but in the intimate things of human conduct. It will be fought, not by priests and schoolmen, but by men and women fighting for their children.

This is the possibility which perhaps the pessimists sometimes overlook. The doubtful assumption is this—that the poorest, living in misery, have many children because they want to, and that, even if pregnancy is made really voluntary, the successful will remain sterile and the unsuccessful fertile. This is not a necessary belief. It is incredible that any considerable number of people who know that if they have children those children will be unhappy, through hereditary defect or through the conditions into which they will be born, will deliberately produce them. The mentally defective are perhaps to be considered separately in this from all other groups to the community. Whatever methods science may provide in the future for the control by the individual of his own fertility will hardly be applicable to these. The very characteristics which ought to be divorced from fertility make the mentally afflicted unfitted to use them. For them sterilisation as an adjunct to segregation seems the only way of preventing fertility. But apart from these there remain all the great mass of ordinary men and women, neither very good, nor very bad. It is to these that science may be able to give the power of control.

How this power is to be used science cannot say. It will be fought over, but it will come, and its coming could bring security and tranquility to replace the endless tortures of doubt and fear which today wreck the homes of so many. It is difficult for securely established middle-class citizens to remember the strain put on the human relations of a husband and wife whose unemployment pay will not allow them even the clumsy contraceptives which they can use. These methods will in all probability be superseded before very many years by a real control, but will this knowledge when won be given freely to the people who want it? It will if enlightened thoughtful men and women, prepared to put humanity before prejudice, and equipped with knowledge of the real conditions of the world, will stand firm in support of this freedom.

The ordinary men and women of England are good enough to be trusted. To say otherwise is to say that our civilisation, our family life, and our homes are founded upon the misery of ignorance. If they are, they can go. They are not. Freedom to control fertility will not bring destruction. It will not bring the end of the race. Is it likely that one of the strongest of all human instincts, the instinct to have children who shall be happy, is suddenly going to be killed by the power to avoid having children who are not? The power to control fertility is not going to destroy the family, because people like the family as a unit, and will continue to do so. But the control of fertility is going to destroy the power of the family to degrade and kill women.

The present instability of society caused by the differential fertility can be robbed of much of its danger by the simplest of means. For less will be heard of the differential birth rate when all classes really have an equal chance to exercise a conscious control of fertility. One who has faith in our race need ask for nothing more than freedom for all sections of our society, to replace the quack and the unskilled abortionist who rule over the greater part of it today.

Freedom of this kind will probably produce quite a new type of society. That is why the secure are afraid of it. The drift upwards to death will be changed. Humanity need hardly be despaired of if for it there should be substituted a drift upwards to life. Perhaps a society will arise in which fertility shall be a prize, instead of a pitfall. Perhaps that world would seem strange to us, but we shall not be called upon to live in it. We might however, let our children try it. They would form a society which would differ from ours in its ideals, in its kinetics, and in its structure. It seems likely that one of two things will happen. Either there will grow a classless society with perfect fluidity enabling any child to earn its living in any way for which it finds itself suited, or else there will arise a society sharply divided into classes, whose classes will be based upon the kind of difference between men about which biologists can talk. Which of these two possibilities will be realised appears to be a subject for pure speculation.

PAUL G. ESPINASSE.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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CONTENTS

	Page.		Page.
Notes and Happenings	1	Catholicism Versus Science	
Rationalism and the Bhagvad-Gita		Reprinted from the Hindu ...	18
by M. V. V. K. Rangachari ...	6		
Interesting Items by C. L. D'Avoine	8	What Does the Koran teach ?	
Freeing the Slaves and Abolition		Editorial Notes	23
of Slavery by Viviam Phelips ..	11-12		
Population Control in India by		Correspondence the Humanist	
Cedric Dover	15	Movement	23

Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, The Editor "Reason," 3, Morland Road, Byculla, Bombay. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India, 41, Queen's Road, Bombay 2.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

The daily papers, some days ago, announced that a Hindu cobbler living at Mazagon, Bombay, who was suffering from fever sought the services of a sorcerer to rid him of his disease which he believed was caused by a demon. The sorcerer willingly attended him as desired and immediately began to administer his

remedy which consisted in vigorously flogging the evil spirit with a good Malacca cane. The remedy proved a bit too drastic for the poor wretch who soon collapsed under it. He was hastily removed to Hospital and the magician was arrested by the Police. The flogging of patients by exorcists to rid them of evil

spirits is a common superstition in India, Africa and elsewhere. Thousands in this country are mercilessly flogged in this manner under the belief that only such strong measures can drive demons out of the bodies of people who are believed to be under their spell. (See below some cases of this nature reported by a qualified Ahmedabad Doctor).

* * *

The present writer was once urgently called to attend an educated Christian who had fallen into a swoon. The man who was suffering from an acute orchitis was persuaded to get himself treated by a Sadhu who would drive the evil spirit out of him. The Sadhu tied the feet of the patient and suspended him head downward from the ceiling while a segree full of dried chillies and incense was kept burning under his nose. While in that position he was severely flogged by the Sadhu until he fainted. Alarmed at his condition, his friends cut down the rope and rescued him from that dangerous predicament. When the writer arrived the patient was just recovering his senses!

* * *

The belief that diseases were caused by evil spirits was once universal. Before Medical Science enlightened people on the causes of diseases, the exorcists were always in great demand to cure people. The Christian Bible is full of such examples and believers in Evil possession had that Book for authority. As we all know, one of the activities of Jesus Christ during his short mission on earth was to cast out Evil Spirits from the bodies of sick people who sought relief from him. Even now, many in Europe believe in evil possession. Charms and amulets are worn against that and priests are frequently requested to perform exorcism to drive away the evil spirits which

trouble patients. The present writer, in his young days, frequently assisted priests in that ceremony which was frequently done particularly in cases of sick children suffering from various ailments.

* * *

It is a mistake to think that this belief is now confined to ignorant villagers. Many people who lay claim to certain intellectual culture believe in the reality of evil possession. The present writer, not very long ago, had an argument with a cultured Italian gentleman who strongly believed in this. That man was a B.A. and D.Sc. of the Royal University of Naples! A qualified Ahmedabad doctor, in the Magazine of the Ahmedabad Medical School for October 1934, relates three cases which he believes were due to evil possession. Dr. Jacob Solomn, L. M. & S. in effect, tells us that some time ago he treated a young girl of 8 who suffered from an eczema, which resisted all his treatment. As he scented evil possession, he advised to consult a Christian Sorcerer of his acquaintance to deal with the case. This was done. The Christian sorcerer made passes and administered "Magnetized water" (What is that?) with the best of results. It was subsequently learnt on careful enquiries that the poor girl was the victim of sorcery caused by her jealous relatives!

* * *

The second case related by Dr. Saloman is that of a man who suffered from intermittent pulse and palpitation. When the disease proved obstinate and resisted the treatment of the worthy doctor, he detected evil possession and advised to call in a magician who soon cured the patient. Such a disease as extra systole and palpitation often found in neurotic individuals suffering from dyspepsia, is harmless enough though causing uneasi-

ness. In the case of Dr. Salomon's patient the trouble, it would appear, was caused by "five entities and sorcery which selected the heart for their nefarious work." This selection is, indeed, curious. Why such a small organ as the heart when the five entities could safely and comfortably lodge themselves in more spacious places—the intestines for instance—to play their mischief? But the ways of evil spirits as those of God are evidently mysterious and we must not ask the reason why. Any how, these five entities proved to be very obstinate devils. Dr. Salomon says that they were determined not to depart easily and voluntarily—sharp measures were necessary and they were adopted. These consisted in solemn incantations, exhortations and frequent floggings. He took ten days to dislodge them after which they reluctantly left the patient alone.

* * *

The third case of Dr. Salomon is even more interesting. It was that of a Mahomedan Hakim, a friend of the Doctor, who unwillingly stumbled against an "Ootaria" placed in the crossing of four roads—(It must be explained that an "Ootaria" is made of three sticks tied as a triangle on which the earthen pot containing the fire for the funeral pyre of a Hindu is carried) This object after the ceremony, for occult reasons, is always left at the crossing of four roads. It was against such an innocent object that the unfortunate Hakim accidentally stumbled against. The effect, however, was tragic and serious. The poor Mahomedan became immediately possessed and began to behave strange y and violently. According to Dr. Salomon he showed signs of double personality. At one time he kept

shouting that he was one Chimanlal and at other times he was a Mahomedan. On the advice of the doctor, an exorcist was sent for and thanks to his ministrations the evil spirit left the poor Hakim. The treatment consisted of catching the patient's hair with one hand and with the other he was slapped on the cheeks as hard as possible while Arabic words were being pronounced. Under this assault the wicked "Discarnate spirit" had no choice but to disclose his identity and announced his decision to leave the patient alone. He was cautioned under pains of a severe hiding not to return. Before departing he announced that he was one Chimanlal Mochi who had committed suicide a few days previously and that it was his determination to kill the unfortunate Hakim because he had insulted him by kicking his "Ootoria." Dr. Salomon is sorry that for want of space he could not relate more cases of this nature. We would suggest him to get into communication with Dr. Alexander Cotton, M. D., M. R. C. P. etc. London, who writes books on these occult subjects, he, himself, being a great believer in them.

* * *

On the 5th of March last, Mrs. E. How-Martyn, M. Sc. (London), the Hon. Director, Birth Control International Centre, a well-known Social Worker who had been touring India in the cause of the Birth Control Movement, delivered an interesting lecture at the Blavatsky Lodge on the Progress of Birth Control. Though the lecture was under the auspices of Our Association, few Rationalists were present. The Hall, however, was packed with an eager audience and great interest was taken in the lecture. Mrs. Hon. Martyn emphasized the good that the Birth Control Movement was doing

in the West as the necessity for it is being more and more recognized by all thoughtful people. She said that Birth Control should especially be taught to the Working Classes as their prolificity was their own enemy. She thought that every organization working for the good of Humanity should be interested in this movement. She reminded the audience that the world was getting overpopulated through the removal of natural checks which formerly operated strongly in keeping the balance level. Unless measures were taken to control the birth rates of people who cannot afford to rear many offsprings poverty was bound to increase. She discussed the advantages of Birth Control, and the erroneous ideas of those who opposed it. She advocated the establishment of clinics in as many places as possible and the teaching of Birth Control in colleges, etc. She gave more lectures on the subject before other Associations in Bombay and in other cities in India.

* * *

To show to what extent the Birth Control movement is gaining ground in England, it is only necessary to recall that sixty years ago it was a criminal offence to print or publish any advice regarding birth control in England. Now, even the privileged classes are anxious to proclaim their sympathy with it. We read in the London Times of December 19:—

"LIMITATION OF POPULATIONS"

"The Limitation of Population dinner was held at Claridge's last night. Lady Maureen Stanley presided, and the speakers also included Lord Horder, the Countess of Limerick, Sir Patrick Hastings K. C., and Mr. Frederick Lonsdale. Among those who took tickets were:—Earl de La Warr, Lady Milbanke, Vis-

count Castlereagh, Captain Cazalet, M.P., Miss Thelma Cazalet, M.P., Mr. Duff Cooper, M. P., and Lady Diana Cooper, Ethel Lady Buchanan-Jardine, Lord Ivor Spencer-Churchill, Lady North, Lady Fulton, Mrs. Michael Balcon, Mrs. Israel Sieff, Lady (Herbert) Cohen, Mrs. Robert Fleming, Dr. Scott Williamson, Viscountess Hambleden, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, Viscount Borodale, Lady Deuman, Sir James Purves-Stewart, Dr. H. Beckett-Overy, Mr. H. E. Molson, M. P., Mr. C. U. Peat, M. P., Lady Askwith, Sir Samuel Rosbotham, Mrs. Sacher, Mrs. Edward Hunter, Mrs. Norman Laski, Mr. C. Waterhouse, Mr. Cedric Lane Roberts, Mrs. Hugh Jackson, Mrs. Robert Dundas, Mrs. Alec Tweedie, Mrs. Sydney Frankenburg, Mr. J. H. Skinner, Dr. Henry J. Nelson, Mrs. Sebborne, Mr. Robert Behar and Mrs. Goodenday."

* * *

The "Daily Herald" of January 4th says:—

"Clergy and Churchmen of many denominations, doctors, and prominent Social Workers have joined forces in an attempt to induce the Birmingham City Council to establish a clinic for the teaching of birth control. They have signed a manifesto calling on citizens to use their influence to persuade the council to rescind its decision not to set up a clinic. Among the signatories are:—Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, Canon T. Guy Rogers, Rector of St. Martin's Birmingham, Dr. A. Cohen, Chief Rabbi in the city, and Dr. H. F. Humphreys."

* * *

One is glad to note that the Birmingham City Council has since decided to establish a clinic.

Here, in India, we also will make progress in this movement despite the opposition of bigoted people, especially some Roman Catholics, who recently made a lot of noise in Southern India and in Kurrachee against this movement. As most of our readers will remember, a German Jesuit in Madras actually had the temerity to say that all who advocated Birth Control were filthy, wicked and demoralized people!

* * *

The Journal of The Young Men's Parsi Association for January 1935 contains an article:—"Some Parsi Customs—How they are observed" by K. D. U., which is very interesting.

The author of that article rightly complains that though the Parsis are credited with being the most progressive community in India, they still retain in their religious and social customs many features that are incongruous and out of date. That writer went so far as to describe them as absurd and ridiculous. He particularly refers to the Navjote or initiation ceremony, the marriage and funeral ceremonies. He objects to the use of "Nirang" or Cow's Urine as an ablution to purify the aspirants. It would appear that as soon as a Parsi dies a dog is brought to view the corpse in order to dispel the evil spirits that may be lurking about, and before the final

disposal of the corpse at the Tower of Silence it is again viewed by a dog.

* * *

It is no doubt a pity that the conservative element in the Parsi community is so strong that those who are anxious for a thorough reform of all these archaic customs find it very difficult to press their views. A good deal of this conservative spirit is certainly due to the fact that the Parsi being a small community is in danger of being swallowed by the larger communities which surround it. Consequently they feel that the customs and practices which are characteristic of the Parsi Community must not be abandoned. Old stars die one by one and probably with the rising of new ones the desired reform will set in without causing much bitterness.

* * *

On the 14th of February last Our Association held its general meeting at Mongini's and it was followed by a dinner at the same place. Owing to the increasing apathy and indifference of many of our members there was a poor response which was most depressing for those who made it a point to be present. It is a pity that in India enthusiasm generally burns for a little while and gradually dies out. Fortunately among the members here there are some who are as keen as ever to work for the cause of Rationalism in India.

RATIONALISM AND THE BHAGVAD-GITA. (IX)

(The relativity of Ethical Values.)

Moral agency rests upon freedom. An individual or society that has no choice is incapable of action that may be named conduct. It is no doubt impossible to remain totally inactive even for a minute.

Nahi kaschit kshanamapi jatu
tisthatyakarmakrit
Karyateh yavasah karma sarvah
prakritjairgunaih.
(Gita, III, 5)

(None can remain really actionless even for a moment.)

An act which cannot be helped does not afford basis for judgment. As with individuals, so in regard to communities and nations, ethical value attaches to such actions as are the result of free choice. A downtrodden community that reacts to the spur of pricking iniquity has no moral responsibility more than the horse that chafes under an irritating saddle. The kick is but an impulse stimulated by the sore skin. It is even a virtual deception to attribute agency for deeds.

Prakriteh kriya manani gunaih
karmani sarvasah
Ahamkara vimudhatma karta
ahamiti manyate (Gita III, 27)

(Deeds are the outcome of the qualities of nature. The fool deluded by egoism thinks "I am the doer.")

The ways of nature are inexorable, human wisdom, notwithstanding. It is futile to think of overriding to dictates. How we act, feel, and think is determined by the setting into which we had been carried by the current of evolution.

Sadrisam cheshtate svasyah
prakritergnanavanapi
Prakritim yanti bhutani nigraha
kim karishyati? (Gita, III, 33)

(Even the wise man behaves in conformity with his own nature, all beings follow its evolution, and restraints avail not.)

An effort to stem the tide of natural processes is not merely doomed to failure, but is often fraught with danger. The path of reform is none too smooth. Very few, indeed, may detach themselves from their environmental trappings, and overcome the fear involved in the breaking away from the familiar ground of Swadharma.

Sreyan swadharma vigunah
paradharmat swanishthitat
Swadharma nidhanam sreyah
paradharmo bhayavahah
(Gita, III, 35)

(One's natural action, devoid of merit, is to be preferred to the duty of another, well performed. Even death in doing one's duty is higher. Another's duty is fraught with fear.)

This is the confirmation of the path of action relatively to one's own position. Those that would sustain the conservative ground on the basis of pronouncements in the Gita must be prepared when the Gita declares such attachment itself to be the outcome of Moha, or illusion. Elsewhere, in diverse contexts, the discourse turns upon the cutting off of the conventional relationships. (Of, Gita XV, 3: Asanga sastrena drudhena chittva: cutting down by the weapon of non-attachment.) The tendency to identify oneself with events is condemned in unmistakeable terms, and the spirit of Yoga, the capacity to retain the detached view of life, the life of Sakshi (disinterested witness) sitting

indifferentetly (udasinavad asina) is enjoined. And it is claimed that such an effort at Yoga will result, even if faintly commenced, in the emancipation from great fear. (Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahote bhayat, II, 40.) In the face of the dynamic activity that the Gita ordains, it would be futile to seek support in its teachings for the reactionary position which the stabilising sociologists wish to maintain. Those that would chain human action for ever, in the illusory faith that the final word was already said, the final deed was already done, and the final shape was already given to human society forget the fundamental truth regarding life, viz, the central doctrine of the relativity of human values.

In the article "Coloured Vision" by Prof. H. Levy of the London University (see R. P. A. Annual 1934 pp. 21 to 26) the tendency to leave out of account the most important element, the creative man, from the consideration of the world's economic, scientific, political, and social problems is brought out. Even in philosophising, man tends to isolate his concepts much as the chemist would isolate the phenomena for his experiment in the laboratory. 'One of the consequences of the stratification of the society he builds up is to provide the unsuspecting victim who is born and bred in these classes with sets of values, dogmas, and interlocking forms of behaviour. While out of these he may erect a set of principles signifying something fixed and permanent to him, for which if necessary he will fight or accept martyrdom, they are effectively rationalisations with a class and individual colouring. Of absolutes there are none in nature, other than the fact of the

existence of objective nature itself. Our pictures of the world are only approximate, their accuracy being relative to the state of scientific knowledge of the times. Our values again are certainly relative, borrowing their tints from the social strata from which we are drawn, and from these features of the world that have specially stirred us in our encounter with them." (Ibid, p. 25) This tendency towards over-stressed abstraction is responsible for the confusion at the basis of all calculation. The reflective account given by Prof. Levy brings to mind the peculiar fallacy attributed to the disciples of a philosopher, named Parmanandaih. They were nine in number, but when the revered Guru wanted each one to count them, he would give out only eight, forgetful of himself. It is the fallacy of the forgetful self. "Even science that prides itself on the fact that it stands above race, class and creed, is not immune from this relativity of values." It strips all human values from the world, leaving man completely out of its calculations. The industrialist condemns science that carries on as if he did not exist. It discovers new methods of production too fast to cope with. The very machinery becomes obsolete during erection. "What has science done for us" "chimes in the worker" except give us rationalisation, and with it unemployment, so that we are robbed of the very fruits it offers us." (ibid p. 26).

While science ignores man and ignores society, philosophy loses itself in the speculation of the problems of the mind separated from matter. The worker and the industrialist change the face of the earth and create forms of society. He who is able to realise the relativity of

these values is one who has thrown away the coloured spectacles.

Adhyatma gnana nityatvam tatvagnanardha darsanam.

Etat gnanam iti proktam agnanam yadatonyadha (gita, XIII, 12).

(Constancy in knowing the real nature of the self, the realisation of the true essence, that is wisdom. All else is ignorance.)

The recognition of the fact that experiments carried on under laboratory conditions convey imperfect truth, that codes of morals formulated under conditions differing widely from our own have to be accepted with caution, that the so-called "permanent and fundamental principles" are to unconsciously rationalised from the particular society within which we have been cradled ' is the true beginning of emancipation through

knowledge, Moksha attained by Gnana. He who has realised this relativity reaches the ideal, and is not left hankering after fresh pursuits, whatever his mode of life.

Ya snam votti purusham prakritimcha gunaisaha.

Sarvadha vartamanopi na sa bhuyoabhi jayate. (Gita, XIII, 24)

(He who thus knoweth life, with the limitations inherent in its settings, whatever be his condition, has nothing left to return for.)

It is emancipation in itself to be aware of the relativity of such values. To return to the philosophical paradox of *drandva*, the recognition of relativity in human values is the attainment of absolute truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

INTERESTING ITEMS

In the "Le Jour" of Paris of the 12th February last, the Presiding Judge of the Seine Assizes Court is reported to have said:—"The French Criminal Courts were nowadays engaged in trying mostly foreigners, generally Italians." Out of ten murder cases in France said the Judge eight were committed by Italians. So it is in America. The Italians are the most religious people of Europe. Is this the fruit of their religious up bringing?

The French papers are full of accounts of crimes of violence which are daily committed in that country by foreigners. It is true that there are many foreigners in France in these days and it would

appear that the worst characters of Italy and Czecho-Slovakia have emigrated to France.

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A representative of the same journal says that he has visited a number of establishments conducted by Fortune tellers in France and from what he has seen he is firmly of opinion that the belief in occultism and necromancy was increasing in France. In Paris alone there are hundreds of Saloons kept by these people who make a thriving business. He says that the sight of the large number of dupes who patiently wait in those rooms is most depressing. "To have seen the number of elegant women

with scared faces, men with anxious mien, young men on tenter hooks, hundreds of degenerates who are tortured with an intolerable and unhealthy curiosity to peep in to the future, thousands who are attracted towards mysticism, and the lure of secret forces ; when one has seen this large crowd of beings all under the influence of a morbid mysticism, all determined to wrest the secrets of the future and to escape at whatever cost the blind fatality of existence, one feels sad and depressed at the stupidity of humanity. ”

English and American writers say that the same thing obtains in England and America. For us there is nothing surprising in this. As we have already said in these columns, there is a serious intellectual set back in the West since the last war. Many writers have drawn attention to this. In a remarkable book “The Search for Truth ” by Prof. Eric Temple Bell (George Allen and Unwin) this question is thoroughly discussed.

Prof. Bell says that the new outlook that science has acquired during the present century has certain very undesirable consequences. It has, in the hands of certain expositors encouraged various forms of “ mysticism ” and given rise to a great deal of muddled and shoddy thinking. (A shaft, no doubt, at the mysticism of such men like Sir James Jeans, Sir Arthur Eddington and some other eminent scientists). This wave of mysticism, says Prof. Bell, has invaded even some of the lofty heights of science itself. There are certain modern scientific speculations the Professor thinks, which really belong to fairy land. Indeed, he says, there is no department of thought which is immune from the wave

of irrationality which is sweeping the world.

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Professor Bell feels very gloomy about this. “ Exact thought ”, he says, “ may flourish for a few years yet, but we have almost reach the end.” He thinks that in a short time we shall enter on a period of almost complete stagnation which may last for eight or ten centuries. Faith in science and reason, he says, was lost in the war. Now vast mass of civilized mankind every where hates and distrusts science and reason.

“ Rational thought, says Prof. Bell, has always had difficulties in maintaining itself against irrationality and mysticism. ”

The cause of this is not for to seek. As long as education will remain in the hands of the clergy, mysticism and irrationality will flourish in the world. Russia is now making a great experiment in the education of its subjects and the world may soon learn a good deal from this before very long.

* * *

Dr. Owen Berkley Hill, I.M.S (Retd.) in an interesting article in the Illustrated Weekly Times of Bombay among other things says :—“ There is to begin with, far too much religion in India, too much talk about India’s spirituality. A college devoted to the inculcation of an uncompromising Atheism is what is most urgently wanted in this country. Some day, perhaps, a wealthy and patriotic Indian will found one. Its foundation will mark the beginning of an Indian Renaissance such as took place in Europe five hundred years ago. ”

It would, indeed, be glorious if the intellectual world were to be rescued by India. While the West is fast sinking

in an intellectual stupor, (one of the inevitable effects of the Last War) India may yet hold the torch of Reason and guide the intellect in its true path. Rationalism has a great future in this country if only the thoughtful here could seriously realize its potentialities. The Rationalist Association of India has been founded for this purpose. It only awaits the support of influential people to push it along.

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One feels that Sir Arthur Keith, the eminent English Anthropologist, wasted his time in replying to a die hard like the aged Sir Ambrose Flemming who recently in a lecture in England upheld the Special Creation Theory of the Bible against the theory of Evolution. Sir Arthur Keith, of course, had no difficulty in smashing that antiquated electrician into smithereens. Sir Ambrose Fleming who is now 86 years old is well known as an eminent scientist in the field of electricity. When he left that field to make an excursion into that of biology, he made a laughing stock of himself. Sir Arthur Keith and Sir Elliot Smith took his divagation too seriously. One does not kill a fly on the wheel or smash a bottle with a sledge-hammer.

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Nothing is more amusing than to read the report of an interview given by Miss

Evangeline Booth to some newspapers here. According to that lady that brand of Christianity, known as the Salvation Army, is so successful that already it can afford to laugh at Science. This noisy branch of Christianity justly christened "Corybantic Christianity" by the late Prof. T. H. Huxley, owes its temporary success to its social work and certainly not the "spiritual verities" it preaches. While it imagines that it is feeding hungry and restless souls in their search for God, it is really filling the bellies of some unfortunate wretches who have no choice but to listen to its medievalism. To imagine that the Salvation Army is a spiritual force likely to convert the world is a piece of folly that only those who are infatuated with its absurdities can entertain. It must not imagine that because it has a certain following that it is already a great success in the World. Many sects have risen and disappeared during the long history of Christianity. Even Christian Science with its ridiculous doctrine has a large following. Spiritualism has enlisted a large number. In the present intellectual state of the West any mysticism can flourish. But does this mean that they all will triumph in the end? A Jesuit must have his own opinion about them.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE FREEING OF THE SLAVES.

Humanity's "Dreadful Curse."

The following letters appeared in the Cape Times of South Africa and are published with the author's permission.

From the celebration in the churches of the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in South Africa the general public, white and coloured, are left with the impression that this abolition was due, in some measure at least, to the efforts of the Churches in Christendom. I cannot believe that it is right from any point of view that people should remain so grossly misinformed. By the time of Christ, slavery had assumed enormous proportions. At Rome there were 900,000 slaves in a population of 1,610,000. The markets were filled with the most unscrupulous traders, much in the same way as they were all over Christendom in the seventeenth century of the Christian era. Not a word was spoken in condemnation of this cruel institution either by Christ or St. Paul or by any apostle or by any Father of the Church. It is an historical fact, supported by the most positive evidence, that slavery in the Roman Empire was mitigated by the noble philosophy of the Stoics and not by the teaching of the Church Fathers, who never thought of recommending the abolition of slavery. Later in the first few centuries of Christian power there were more slaves than there had been under the pagans, and even Milman admits that the Church gave no blessing to slave "marriage" until the ninth century.

Coming now to the terrible recrudescence of slavery in the Christian colonies in the fifteenth century, "the African

slave trade", says Mr. Brace, a Christian apologist, "was the most dreadful curse that has perhaps ever afflicted humanity", and he admits, with a most rare generosity, that "the guilt of this great crime rests on the Christian Church as an organised body." ("Gesta Christ," p. 365). It was, of course, just because William Wilberforce found himself opposed by the Churches and by those of his fellow-Christians who had vested interests in the upkeep of slavery that his task was so difficult, and that he stands out as the man who secured the abolition of slavery. Even were it otherwise and the Church had at long last come to the assistance of Wilberforce, I do not see that this action would entirely redeem the circumstances of its having looked on the awful traffic with at least indifference for 200 years. It is a relative blessing for a man to desist from a criminal course; but the fact of his at length desisting does not erase his misdeeds from our memory.

In America it was the Quakers who began to protest, and it was chiefly Unitarians and Humanitarians who lit up the North with moral indignation. It was Wilberforce himself who said of the American Episcopal Church: "She raises no voice against the predominant evil; she palliates it in theory and in practice she shares in it." Many of its Southern bishops held slaves, and it was calculated that Baptists owned 225,000 and Methodists 250,000. It was left for anti-Christian, revolutionary France to set the example to the rest of Europe by being the first to decree the freedom of the

slaves in its colonies. (In his day, Voltaire estimated that the church held between 50,000 and 60,000 slaves.)

In the hundred years ending 1776, the English carried into the Spanish, French and English colonies three million slaves. Large numbers were required to keep up the supply owing to the many who died during the passage. They were crammed together like herrings in a barrel and contracted putrid and fatal disorders. Exclusive of the slaves who died before leaving Africa (Rohlf informs us that "anyone who didn't know the way by which the caravans pass would only have to follow the bones that lie right and left of the track), not more than fifty out of every hundred lived to work on the plantations. And when there ? It is calculated that although between 1690 and 1820 and fewer than 800,000 negros had been imported to Jamaica, yet, at the latter date, only 340,000 were on the island ! Could anything connected with Roman slavery compare with this ? Remember, too, that the very irons

used by the native chiefs for shackling the prisoners when handing them over to the Christian traders were made in Birmingham, and the greatest horrors of slavery have been exhibited only under the rule of the Christian slave-owner.

Personally I am confident that the rise and influence of humanism will continue its good work, imbuing the churches more and more with its spirit. This religion of humanism (as part and parcel) of the Christian and every religion and on its own) cannot spread too widely or too quickly for it may will be even now that it is on this that the fate of the whole world depends. Another world war and who can say whether humanism or anything else of value to the human race will continue to exist. The voice crying then that all quarrels between nations should and can be settled by arbitration instead of by senseless carnage, will be a voice crying in a wilderness.

THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

Christianity's unfortunate attitude towards slavery and especially in the near past regarding negro slavery-introduced, remember, by Christians themselves, supported by their Churches and their Governments—deserves our careful consideration in that it is a glaring example of the extent to which all the supernatural religions of the world have inevitably been from time to time a bar to the progress of human happiness. Nor must we overlook the complete change nowadays for the better in the attitude towards

slavery. It justifies the harbouring of some little hope that the rising tide of humanism may sweep away all the barriers which still remain before it is too late.

On the other hand, when we think of such things as the iniquity of human sacrifices, for ages the practice in all these religions, north, south, east and west of this planet ; of the sanguinary religious wars and massacres ; of the wicked lives in the days gone by of many of the Popes in the age of faith and the depths of human

degradation and misery at that time; of religious persecution and the Holy Office for the suppression of heresy; of the terror introduced all these centuries into the lives of innocent children by the doctrine of hell and eternal torture; of, comparatively lately, the witch-burning (as late as 1768 we find Wesley stating that to give up the belief in witchcraft was in effect giving up the Bible), and the condemnation of the use of anaesthetics, etc.—when we think of all these fatal errors as past and gone, never to return, we trust, how far shall we be wise in lessening our efforts for the removal of all the other barriers erected by harmful superstitions and still hindering progress? Are we wise to expect *this to come about soon enough by itself?*

Birth Control.

Take the matter of birth control as an example. Birth control is perhaps the most important discovery of our time. Is it being put to its full and proper use among the teeming millions of the struggling poor to be found in almost every country in the world? And if not, why not? I notice in last Saturday's *Intaglio* that my friend, Mrs. Edith How Martyn is leaving for the Far East to further the cause of birth control in co-operation with the workers of India. She will find fierce opposition to her humane work not only from Hindu and Mussulman, but from the Roman Catholic Church in India. So, again, with regard to the grave warning by Dr. E. G. Malherbe, Director of the National Bureau of Education, given at the annual meeting of the Pretoria Mother's Clinic at Polley's Hotel recently. He pleads for the use of birth control as the weapon to check the advance of poor whiteism

and he shows how white South Africa is in danger through the truly disgenic feature of unbalanced fertility amongst the weaker and poorer classes. But how is the inertia of public opinion and of law to be moved so long as the Church of Rome in South Africa is up in arms against Birth Control? In my humble opinion birth control is the most important question of our day. Disregard it and wars are indeed as inevitable as the most confirmed militarist would have them to be.

The whole subject to which I have now briefly referred is, I strongly feel, of such incalculable importance that I have decided to give some useful, if startling, information concerning it in a pamphlet which will be duly advertised when printed. It will be in this pamphlet that your correspondents, Dr. John Colgan, the Rev. L. S. Creed, and Admiral Woolly will obtain my full reply to their strictures and I shall see to it that they duly receive a copy. Meanwhile I append the following for observations:

Definite Condemnation.

When Dr. Colgan refers to one of my statements as "simply not true", he omits to mention that I was quoting Dean Milman: Dr. Colgan also informs your readers that I must be grossly ignorant of the history of Christian civilisation. Presumably the Reverend Dr. must consider that Dean Milman is also grossly ignorant when he writes (see "History of Latin Christianity," vol. II, p. 14) The abrogation of slavery was not contemplated even as a remote possibility. A general enfranchisement seems never to have dawned on the wisest and best of the Christian writers".

With respect to Dr. Colgan's attempted explanation of there being no definite

condemnation of slavery either by Christ or by St. Paul or by any of the Apostles, I must admit my inability to follow his argument. We may agree for the nonce with Dr. Colgan that Christ championed the dignity of labour. Was it Martha the worker or Mary, who refused to help her, who received his praise?—Is this not an additional reason for expecting a definite condemnation of the indignity, not to mention inhumanity, of slavery? St. Paul's teaching is clean and explicit. Slaves are to be obedient to their masters and, adding practice to precept, he sent the runaway slave Onesimus back to his master. As a matter of fact there is a perfectly legitimate explanation, at least, so it seems to me, for a failure to condemn slavery at that particular period and spot, and this is that the treatment of slaves, especially by the Jews, was on the whole humane. This may be verified by turning to the article on slavery in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. The slave who was a co-religionist and fellow-worshipper was usually treated with kindness and even with fatherly care "just as today, in Islam, slaves as fellow-believers are treated with all humaneness. The brotherhood in the faith in Islam now, as in Islam of old, is not, as unfortunately as it has come to be in the Christian world, a mere empty phrase, but a very real force". (*Enc. Bib. vol. Iv, p. 4,658.*)

Dr. Colgan's brief reference to the main question we are considering of negro slavery consists of an assertion that he could fill a column with the protestations of Popes. Considering the still stupendous power of the Church of Rome during those hundreds of years when negro slavery flourished, it seems surprising that these protestations should have had no effect whatever in the

removal of this blot all these years on our Christian civilisation. A possible explanation might be that these protestations were so hedged round with qualifications as to become useless. An instance of this may be observed by a study of the Encyclical Letter to the Bishops of Brazil from Pope Leo XII, dated May, 1888.

Upheaval.

Dr. Colgan wishes us to believe that the Church of Rome, herself a possessor of slaves to the last, held her hand in attacking slavery for fear of an upheaval "the clash would have been inevitable and terrible". Well! All I can say is that 1,860 years should constitute a record for the policy of "wait and see."

Dr. Colgan tells us, "To say that the Church countenanced slavery in the Middle Ages is another of Mr. Phelps' mistakes. In the Middle Ages slavery had disappeared in Catholic countries". He admits, of course, the subsequent revivals. Also in his reply to Mr. Silke he mentions that Lecky, an anti Catholic, speaks of "softening slavery into serfdom" and also of Christianity's assistance in this development. The point is: Was serfdom such an improvement on slavery or was it in many respects just as bad? Dr. Colgan seems never to have read "Six Centuries of Work and Wages", by Professor Thorold Rogers, writing about the twelfth and following century, or other later authoritative works bearing on Christianity and labour. The unfortunate serf was tied down in countless ways and, amongst other degradations, his daughter could not marry without the consent of the lord, who frequently demanded payment for permission; or, worse still, the infamous "right of the first night".

My notes on Dr. Colgan's explanation of the silence of Christ will apply also to Mr. Creed's argument based on "the teaching of Jesus Christ on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." However, I shall have more to say on this vexed question in my pamphlet. It is a pity perhaps that I ever touched upon such a controversial matter in my letter, as I notice now that it has diverted the attention of my critics from the most important point for our contemplation—negro slavery.

Position of Women.

Mr. Creed holds that "Christ's teaching about women has given her rightful place". What about the teaching of St. Paul and the Fathers of the Church? This interesting matter of the position of women formerly and how far Christianity has indeed been her best friend, has been closely investigated by me in section 2 p. p. 198-204 of my work, "The Churches and Modern Thought." I shall be happy to present Mr. Creed with a

copy (or he can peruse it in the public libraries or obtain it - its price is nominal from the Cape Town book-sellers).

I must apologise to Mr. Creed for such curt replies to his most courteous and interesting letter, but I cannot expect an ever-so-generously-minded editor to grant me any more space. I shall take care that Mr. Creed has an adequate reply in my proposed pamphlet. I shall send the latter, too, to Admiral Woolly.

When he has read it he will, I think, at least agree that I am not amusing myself "throwing stones". Also, referring to his letter on Monday commenting on Mr. F. R. W. Silke's informative letter of last Friday, I trust he will realise that what Mr. Silke is saying and what I am saying is no "idle chatter best left alone," but a genuine statement of facts, the widespread knowledge and understanding of which is necessary if civilization is not to retrogress.

VIVIAN PHELIPS.

POPULATION CONTROL IN INDIA

The need for Population control in India has been often emphasized. Within the country itself, large sections of the public, both professional and lay, favour the widespread use of contraceptive measures, but pronounced personal views against birth-control are also prevalent. The opponents belong to the so-called educated classes, and base their attitude on religious prejudices so familiar to birth-control workers that they need not be considered here.

Opposition To Birth-Control

Apart from religious and private objections, certain economists feel that birth-control is neither necessary nor feasible in India. Thus, G. S. Ghurye and S. R. Deshpande, who made an economic survey of 2,053 immigrant labourers from Konkan to Bombay a few years ago, felt that their inquiry did not support the need for restricting the birth-rate in India. They found that female reproductivity ceased at twenty-eight years, the

average age of mothers at the first birth being 18.5 years. The interval between births averaged 2.8 years, and the number of children per marriage was 4.4. These figures may be accepted as more or less representative for the labouring classes throughout the country, and provide an apparent case against the practice of contraception. But it does not stand close analysis. For one thing, the incidence of abortions was not considered; nor was adequate importance given to the relief which contraception gives to the family. And Ghurye and Deshpande's survey itself shows how urgent is the need for such amelioration. The sample studied lived almost entirely in one-room tenements under conditions which can be readily imagined. Among the women, 23.8 per cent. belonged to the age-group 21-25 years, the proportion falling to 11.3 per cent. after 30 years, owing to the fact that the older women returned to their homes permanently incapacitated by illness. That this condition could not be wholly ascribed to environmental factors is partly shown from the information that mothers belonging to the age-groups 9-13 and 14-18 years contributed 4.9 and 51.3 respectively of the births. Even on the basis of this inquiry it must be concluded, therefore, that restriction of the birth-rate is necessary in India. Wider studies emphasize this need further.

According to Dr. C. V. Natarajan of the Mysore Health Department, and other workers, the masses, to whom primitive methods are already known, take readily to suggestions for restricting parenthood. The average labourer is certainly capable of assimilating and using simple instruction in the vernacular, and in this connection it is interesting to note that the members of

the Statutory commission (1930) commented on "the shrewdness which often resides in the illiterate peasantry." There is no basis, therefore, for the popular belief that the Indian masses are too ignorant to understand simple contraceptive technique, nor is there any reason to suppose that unsurmountable difficulties prevent wide distribution of this knowledge. It is said that almost every village has its health visitor, and the cost of effective methods can be so greatly reduced as to place them within universal reach, particularly if modest State aid is given. This has been partly proved in Mysore.

The Official Attitude

Neither the Indian Government nor welfare and other ameliorative agencies have given serious consideration to the problem of population control. Apathetic officialdom in India has yet to learn that "it is incompatible with sound public health administration that any Government worthy of the name should allow itself to be deterred against its better judgment from including in the national health services clinics for advice on birth-control."

In some Provinces, however, evidence of interest in the problem is not wanting among those theoretically concerned with the administration. In the Madras Legislative Council, Mr. Shetty's efforts during the last five years have resulted in the inclusion, against a storm of opposition in which Roman Catholics played a dominant part, of birth-control in the maternal welfare activities of the Presidency. It may also be stated that a few years ago the Government of Bombay made a noteworthy decision in repealing the ban imposed by the Board of Censors on a film, issued by the National

Baby and Health Week Committee of Bombay, entitled *If She Only Knew*, which was a propaganda film for birth-control, inasmuch as it illustrated the relationship between frequent pregnancies and tuberculosis.

In certain Indian States the position is more advanced than it is in British India. The Government of Mysore State was, I believe, the first in the world to open (in 1930) official birth-control clinics at its principal hospitals, but between the recognition of the principle and the fruition of its objects there has unfortunately been a wide gap. Visiting one of these clinics in 1932, I was informed by the doctor in charge that she had only had about ten cases, and that conditions were not much better at the other clinics in the State. This was not surprising, since she was opposed to the widespread practice of contraception, relating with pride her discouragement of "women with only three or four children" who had approached her for advice. In other Indian States such as Baroda, Travancore, Cooch Behar, Rajkote, Pittapur and Jaipur, the rulers are also interested in the birth-control movement, but little has been done, except in Travancore, outside the sphere of avowed sympathy.

Unofficial Endeavour

Private activity has resulted in the formation of a few propagandist societies and birthcontrol centres. The former, however, live on the verge of extinction, and the latter are largely associated with the sale of literature and proprietary goods of very doubtful value. The only organization deserving notice is the Madras Neo-Malthusian League, of which Sir Vepa Ramesam, a judge of the Presiden-

cy High Court, is the moving spirit, with the Maharajahs of Pittapur and Jaipur as patrons. It has done valuable propagandic work, and publishes authoritative pamphlets in addition to a useful journal.

To such activities the medical profession has made practically no contribution, though recognizing their need. The Indian Medical Association, however, showed some interest in the subject by requesting a survey of contraceptive technique, and Dr. A. P. Pillay, who has frequently emphasized the bearing of contraceptive knowledge on welfare work conducts "The Eugenic Clinic" at Bombay, where advice is given without restrictive conditions. This clinic is largely confined to the more prosperous classes, but Dr. Pillay hopes to expand his services if he has sufficient support.

Propaganda alone, based on Western experience and a few economic generalizations, will not establish the birth-control movement in a country where contraceptive practice requires a special approach. Methods for the masses require particular attention, the investigation of indigenous products offering a rich field for the combined efforts of laboratory and social workers. One of the main problems of population control in India is of finding a really cheap contraceptive which will ensure a high degree of safety, even if it does not furnish the complete security which combined methods offer to more fortunate persons.

Indian Literature On Contraception

Like most countries, India produces a large volume of contraceptive literature of poor quality. I know of no work published in India that attains the standard of a thorough modern study, but several "popular" works are at least earnest in

purpose. In this category are those by N. S. Phadke and Mercia Heynes-Wood, and the publications of the Madras Neo-Malthusian League. Vernacular pamphlets are also numerous, but there is much scope for brief and reliable information in the vernaculars, such as that supplied in Prof. R. D. Karve's Marathi monthly, *Samaaswasthya*. Meanwhile, there are moderately useful works in Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu.

Organization

Research and propaganda need to be supplemented by adequate organization, if the birth-control movement in India is to be productive. Broadly speaking, the existing machinery of medical administration should be utilized by (1) making contraceptive information available, without restrictive considerations, at all general and maternity hospitals and welfare centres; (2) including birth control on the programme of all departments and associations concerned with public health; (3) instituting short courses on contraception in medical and health schools, and (4) enforcing legislation against quackery and profiteering in connection with the sale of contraceptive literature and products. The formation of an All-India Birth-Control League, which is being

stimulated by the efforts of the Birth-Control International Information Centre in co-operation with local groups, supported by provincial branches, would help to secure official action which it would support and extend. With co-operative organization of this nature, information on birth-control could be made available to the most rural populations, since it is said that every village has its health visitor, whose services can be utilized for this purpose.

Finally, it must be emphasized that contraception alone will not suffice for productive population control in India. The need for sterilization and legalized abortion is imperative in a country where the increasing incidence of such diseases as leprosy and insanity has not proved susceptible to treatment and research, and where abortion is already prevalent and the failures of contraceptive technique are likely to be relatively higher than they are in the West. The sponsors of the birth-control movement must realize that the success of their efforts is charged with danger if concession to illiberal sentiment excludes sterilization, segregation and abortion from the public health programme.

—CEDRIC DOVER

CATHOLICISM versus SCIENCE.

The following appeared in *The Hindu* of 21-2-1935.

Sir A. Krishnaswami Aiyar
and the Catholic Clergy.

Sir,—It is reported in "The Hindu" of the 15th instant that Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar observed that every scientific discovery in the past had met with opposition from the clergy and it

was not surprising that the Roman Catholic Church should oppose it (i. e. Birth-Control).

If Sir Alladi would take the trouble to turn over the pages of the Catholic Encyclopaedia—which is a store house of accurate learning—he would find there a

galaxy of scientists, devout sons of the Catholic Church, who pursued their investigations without let or hindrance. It is true that Friar Roger Bacon and Galileo were put under restraint, not for their scientific investigations but for indulging in bitter controversies and "disturbing the peace" just as any civil Government would put under restraint any citizens, however eminent, who "disturbed the peace."

My professor Mr. (afterwards Sir) J.C. G. used to tell us that while in Paris he had occasion to read some French historians who had recorded French victories over the English which were not alluded to by the English historians he had studied at Oxford.

Certain Rationalists might fulminate against the Catholic Church but we should hear the other side. *Audi alteram partem*. Eminent Catholic philosophers and scientists have proved that *there is no conflict between real science and the Catholic religion. The Catholic Church has no doubt opposed the unwarranted assumptions and inferences of scientists like Haeckel and others.*

Space forbids long quotations. I will refer to only three or four illustrious Catholic Savants. Dr. Brownson one of the greatest philosophers any age has produced says: "I have as a Catholic felt and enjoyed a mental freedom which I never conceived possible while I was a non-Catholic." Similar testimony is borne by Abbe Moigno of Paris, who according to M. Dumas, Secretary of the French Academy of Sciences "had for fifty years marched at the head of the scientific movement," and the immortal Cauchy, one of the most eminent mathematicians of modern times who had the honour of continuing, the work of

Laplace of solving some of the most difficult problems in modern transcendental analysis and of founding, to the glory of France, a new school of mathematical science. Nor need we forget that the great Indian scientist of whose achievements we are so proud, was a pupil of a Catholic priest, the late Father Lafont S.J., an eminent science professor of St Xavier's College, Calcutta.

The proposition that the Catholic Church is hostile to science is quite untenable.

As regards birth-control it is not only the Catholic clergy that has opposed it but also medical men and others of international reputation including Mahatma Gandhi, India's greatest Social Reformer.

—F. REBELLO.

Science in Church-light.

F. Rebello of Royapuram is satisfied that there is no conflict between *real science* and the Catholic religion. "The Catholic Church has no doubt opposed the unwarranted assumptions and inferences of scientists like Haeckel and others," says the defender of the case for the 'other side' against whom certain Rationalist might fulminate. As Rationalism is defined as the mental attitude that unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all *arbitrary assumptions* and authority, the Catholic Clergy will certainly out-Herod Herod if they really oppose the unwarranted assumption of scientists. But there is no assumption more unwarranted than that science will countenance an unwarranted assumption. We fail to understand how any Catholic philosopher can cease to believe that the creation was begun six

thousand years ago, and was made in six days by God that rested on the seventh. If Geology taught better truth, F. Rebello must either keep it close in another pocket, untouched by the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament, which he is bound to carry in the usual place. Eminent catholic philosophers and scientists have been trying hard to prove that Geology is false knowledge, and that the Bible is *real* science. The proof of the absence of conflict, in their case, is by means of excluding the entrance of the natural sciences into their horizon.

Catholic History leads any right-thinking individual to the conclusion summarised by Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer that 'every scientific discovery in the past had met with opposition from the Clergy,' and if this premise is sound it is not faulty logic of the Advocate-General when he said that it was not surprising that the Roman Catholic Church should oppose Birth-Control. The Catholic priests taught that disease is the visitation of God's wrath on humanity, and opposed the administering of drugs and anesthetics to alleviate pain, and remove suffering. True Catholic Faith required that this mortal frame should least be attended to, and Piety and Godliness, and Saintliness were measured in the inverse rate of physical cleanliness. Every advance in human knowledge, and every application thereof to human safety and well-being had its opposition at the hands of the Clergy. Chemistry was condemned as black-magic designed by Satan to tempt man away from the claims of religion. Surgery and anatomy were banned as they did not rest on the faith-cure basis. Eugenics would be an infringement of God's plan's of creation, and poverty is ordained by faith as against a wiser

rule of Economics. We have authentic records of Church History in such well-documented works like Lea's "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Roman Church", citing from the Pope's Bulls and Encyclicals and other official Church-records in several centuries, which throw light on the problem of the eternal conflict between Catholic Faith and scientific pursuit of knowledge. The Catholic Encyclopedia itself bears testimony to several such instances of the scientific mind labouring under the weight of traditional dogma, and religious prejudice. Where the conflict is not driven to the surface, it was accomplished at the expense of science by a sort of compromise effected to the prejudice of independent thought. If Science predominated in certain Catholic minds, it was in spite of their religious training but not on account of it. To rely on the fact that certain eminent scientists were pupils of Catholic Priests is no better than to say that some Rationalists are descended from Catholic ancestors. Indeed Rationalist Reactions spring mostly from Clerical domination, and the Catholic disregard for human sentiment and scientific truth. The fight against Evolution is the latest phase of Catholic History. Biology is opposed by the Church whose faith in the creation of the species by the fiat of an Almighty God would thereby be impaired. Darwin is the most modern enemy of Rome. The Fundamentalist States of America prohibit the teaching of evolution in schools and punished a teacher in Dayton (Tennessee) for the sin of giving instruction to his pupils. Is it any wonder that Birth Control should be warred against by the body of believers who would avoid the use of Chloroform, and modern surgical applia-

nces on the ground that such innovations are offensive to their notions of piety?

Not merely in relation to the physical and biological sciences, but even in respect to sociological matters, the Church would for ever remain behind. Divorce is not recognised at all by the Catholic faith, for the saying is "Whom God hath united, let no man cut asunder." And the device in case of mismating is resorted to of declaring the marriage a nullity. It is a rigid, close system whose rigours have recently earned for Sir Thomas More the status of Saint for services rendered during the reign of Henry VIII.

Marriage law reform in England and other countries has ever to reckon with the weight of Catholic opinion, ranged against it.

History, real History, may not have been available to Sir J. C. G. in Paris or Oxford, but none will agree with F. Rebello's conclusion (see the Hindu d. 21-2-1935, p 7) that the Catholic Church is not hostile to science, unless his *real Science* were to be Catholic Science, supported by the authority of the Biblical Texts.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI,
(R.P.A. Secretary for Madras Presidency)

[Our esteemed contributor, Mr. M. V. V. K. Rangachari of Cocanada, the learned Honorary Secretary of the R. P. A. in South India, sends us some cuttings of "The Hindu" of Madras dealing with a recent controversy on the question of the Roman Catholic Church opposition to science. A Catholic writer, one Mr. F. Rebello, evidently a diligent pupil of semi-educated priests, who, in this country, fill the minds of their innocent alumni with all kinds of fantastic ideas about Science and Religion, stood up for his Church. He was effectively replied by Mr. Rangachari who had not much difficulty in disposing of his erroneous views on the subject. It is remarkable that here, in India, Indian Catholics with Portuguese names always rush forward to defend well founded attacks on their Church, and in doing so they usually display a colossal ignorance of the case. In fact all their knowledge of the question seems to be what they have heard from priests or read in Catholic publications.]

We have only space to publish the first letter of that Catholic writer and Mr. Rangachari's smashing rejoinder. Mr. Rebello's in a second letter attempted to parry the blows Mr. Rangachari rained on him, but in doing so could only trot out the familiar arguments of Catholic priests when they find it necessary to deny the strong indictment laid against their Church. The very fact that these poor deluded people sincerely believe all the ridiculous arguments of Catholic apologists so as to embolden them to write in defence of their Church which has been rightly condemned by all right-thinking people, shows the depth of their ignorance and their peculiar mental attitude. For instance, they only accept Catholic History and the Catholic version of any fact as the only reliable one. They view with suspicion any other source of information. All the same, we feel that Mr. Rangachari has wasted his time in bandying words with an opponent of this class. Just imagine the audacity of the man in making reckless assertions. He would

have us believed that Friar Roger Bacon and Galileo were persecuted, not on account of their scientific discoveries which perturbed the Church very much, but because they were dangerous citizens! Was this alone the reason why they burnt Bruno at the stakes and imprisoned Vesalius, while Copernicus was obliged to remain beyond their reach in the Netherlands? One wonders what Mr. Rebello would have to say in defence of the Papal Bull, issued on the 16th of March 1616 against the Copernician doctrine, prohibiting its teaching under penalty. That Bull distinctly says that the Church opposed that teaching as it was against the Scriptures and against Catholic doctrine. How innocent the Church has been all along! Now, it want to pose as the patron of *real* Science. Real science, it must be understood, is any thing that does not clash with Catholic dogmas. To say that the aged Galileo and Roger Bacon were dangerous citizens is not only a reckless and ridiculous statement, but is a wicked and shameless one, fit only to be uttered by ignorant fanatics, blind to any code of decency and honour.

As is usual with Catholic writers, Mr. Rebello could not fail to drag in Professor Haeckel. Every Catholic who pretends to a smattering of education is full of the story that Haeckel was convicted of frauds and forgeries in misrepresenting his embryological pictures. His opponents, the priests, did try to make such an absurd accusation and they were, in the end, sharply taken to task by thirtysix of the most eminent German biologists who found no fault with Haeckel's pictures. Half educated Catholics know a lot about the accusation, but they do not appear to have ever heard of the sharp rebuke of the German biologists and the contempt of the scientific world for such a stupid accusation. To show the abysmal ignorance of that Indian Catholic with a Portuguese name, it is only necessary to recall what he knows about the question of "Spontaneous generation!" According to him, Haeckel believed and taught that. As a matter of fact, Haeckel never advocated the popular theory about "Spontaneous generation" which was ably exploded by Pasteur and Tyndall, namely, that living organisms suddenly developed in hay infusion, putried water, rotten clothes, etc. What Haeckel understood and taught by spontaneous generation is well explained by him in his "Wonders of Life." He calls this theory "Abiogenesis" namely, that life must have begun in a natural way, by the synthesis of natural gases as no other scientific explanation of the Origin of Life is possible. To day, there is not a scientist who does not accept this view. Mr. Rebello does not appear to know even this, and yet he imagines he is competent enough to ward off the well merited attacks directed against his Church.

ED. REASON.]

"WHAT DOES THE KORAN TEACH?"

In Our January issue there appears an article sent by a contributor under the heading "What does the Koran teach". Several Mahomedan friends of ours have seen us regarding the article in question and they complain that the quotations given are not correct and that they may mislead any one, not conversant with the Koran, into the belief that their Sacred book contains so many

passages that are repugnant to modern ideas. A Mahomedan gentleman who is well acquainted with that book has promised to send us an article to refute the one we published. Up to the time of going to press we have not received his article. Should he send it, we shall gladly publish the same in our April issue.

EDITOR REASON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Editor of Reason.

On January 16, 1935 at Chicago Illinois there was organized the Humanist Press Association, for the purpose of advancing educational all ideas and causes related to the enhancement of human life into here and man.

Officers elected were as follows President, Curtis W. Reese, Dean of Abraham Lincoln Center; Vice-President, A. E. Haydon, Professor of the History of Religions, University of Chicago; Secretary-Treasurer, Edwin H. Wilson, Managing Editor of the New Humanist Magazine. Executive Committee, the foregoing and Burdette Backus, leader of the Chicago Humanist Society; R. Lester Modale, Unitarian Minister at Evanston, Illinois; Raymond B. Bragg, Editor of the new Humanist.

In view of the advocacy by many members of the R. P. A. of England that the Rationalist movement advance to Humanism as its constructive phase, the organization of this group in America should be of interest to readers of *Reason*. John A. Hobson, in his book "Rationalism and Humanism" sounded the call to the British Rationalists in a Conway Memorial lecture in 1933. saying "I therefore issue an earnest invitation to

Chicago, January 15, 1934.

Rationalists to count themselves as Humanists.....Do convinced Rationalists doubt the value of the service that they could render by a fearless application to the backward areas of human thought and conduct of that unfettered reason which has made such progress in the demolition of theology?. G. P. Gooch, noted historian in his preface to Professor Hoson's book says, "Our surest guide is *reason in the service of humanity*" Also that "reason is the great builder rather than the destroyer." This we recognize as Humanism.

Because they believe that the Rationalists of India will find that they have a community of interest with the American Humanists and that neither should let a mere label stand between them and sympathetic fellowship and the exchange of ideas, the Secretary of the Humanist Press Association hereby sends his greetings to the readers of *Reason* and the Rationalist Association of India.

Subscription to the New Humanist, Official journal of the H. P. A. is 1.50 annually. It is published at 330 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois U. S. A. Sample copies will be sent only on receipt of twenty-five cents.

Cordially and respectfully,
EDWIN H. WILSON.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

Vol. IV :

April 1935

No. 3

CONTENTS

	Page.		Page.
Notes and Happenings	1	The Koran—What Does It Teach.	
Ingersoll After One Hundred Years.		by Abdul Majid, M. A.	14
by Vivian Phelps	5	If We Saw God. by Chapman Cohen	18
Did Jesus Ever Live. by C. L.			
D'Avoine	11	Correspondence	21

Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, The Editor "Reason," 3, Morland Road, Byculla, Bombay. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India, 41, Queen's Road, Bombay 2.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

The need for inculcating tolerance was stressed the other day by Sir Fazli-i Hussein, Pro-Chancellor of the Delhi University. Speaking at the 13th Convocation of that University in March last, he said: "Much of life's acerbity will be sweetened if we study the past and view the present and the future with a desire to understand rather than misunderstand the acts and opinions of others."

Nothing fosters intolerance more than religion especially those narrow creeds based on the dogma of exclusive salvation. In India, it is the cause of much misunderstanding among communities, and it is one of the aims and objects of Rationalism to teach the stupidity of this. Few, perhaps, realize that priests, parsons, moulvis, dasturs and swamis can only flourish by preaching intolerance and for

this reason they all look upon Rationalism as their greatest enemy.

* * *

One is glad to note that some influential and thoughtful people in India are just beginning to realize the baneful effect of intolerance and are advising people to cultivate a tolerant attitude. Among these is Justice Kanwar Dalip Sing who like Sir Fazli-i-Hussein, some weeks ago, addressed the students of the Forman Christian College on the subject. Justice Kanwar DalipSingh exhorted them to give religion its proper place, and get no more than its proper place in social life. He would like them to regard universal Justice as even higher than religion and he reminded them that tolerance of criticism was essential for progress. Although Justice Kanwar Dalip Sing must of course, be aware of the existence of Section 295A in the Indian Penal Code, yet he told the students: "No advance in civic life was possible without the greatest freedom being given to criticism of all beliefs, always provided that the primary intention was not to offend."

* * *

Not only on account of that Section which makes it very risky for any one to criticize freely the religious beliefs of the people of this country, but the intolerant attitude of the people makes it even more difficult. Their religious feelings, especially those of the Mahomedans and Christians get deeply wounded by almost anything that may be said against their creeds, and it is evident that many of these people are not yet enlightened enough to understand that honest criticism of creeds is essential to purify them from gross errors and absurdities, and that truth is not afraid of criticism.

It is this extreme intolerance and morbid sensitiveness which have made some fanatics in India perform murderous acts under the plea that their religious feelings were deeply wounded. All this is due to false teaching and erroneous ideas about religion. A strange belief prevails among the ignorant in this country that by dying for their religion they go straight to heaven. They are greatly encouraged in this belief and when any one them forfeits his life in the cause of his religion, he is at once proclaimed as a Martyr!

* * *

Sir Nasarvanji Choksy, M.D. deserves the thanks of those who are organizing the Birth Control movement in this country for the fine moral support he gave them in the Legislative Assembly last month. Sir Nasarvanji is a medical man who has had a very wide experience of diseases in a large city like Bombay. Like most medical men he has witnessed the tragedies of life due to the evils of over population—overcrowding, filth, starvation, diseases, degeneracy, vice and crimes—to mention but a few of those evils. He has seen all this in their ugliness and repulsiveness and is therefore more qualified to speak on the subject than those who have had no real acquaintance with those evils. We are deeply convinced that only those who are unfamiliar with such realities of life; only those who are blinded by ridiculous religious and social prejudices can oppose such a desirable measure as the control of over population. Common Sense, itself, commends it to every right thinking person,

* * *

In its leading article of the 6th April last, The Times of India attempted to discuss the question in the light of the

discussion on the subject in the Legislative Assembly. We were not impressed by its specious argument. It is evident *that that article was written by a person who knows nothing about the subject.* We are in effect, told that it was not over population which is at the bottom of many of the evils attributed to it. It is over production! "Mal adjustments in the economic machine," says The Times of India, "was responsible for this."

* * *

As regards India, The Times of India sought to prove on the authority of Major General Sprawson and Prof. P. J. Thomas of Madras that India was not over populated though the population since 1881 has increased by about 40% and only an *increase of 10½ per cent during the decade ending 1930.* This is said to be based on the number the country could sustain if its agricultural development was fully exhausted. It is sought to prove that such an agricultural development is in progress and therefore the question of over population does not arise! So much for theories based on statistics. It is nonetheless an undisputed fact that despite the alleged agricultural development and a high death rate millions in India are starving, poverty increasing, and unemployment more widespread. It is precisely the prolificity of the classes *which cannot and should not rear many children* which is a danger to the country. How is it possible to form a self-respecting and virile nation with the teeming millions who live under the appalling conditions they are living at present?

* * *

The papers announced that quite recently the Arch Bishop of Canterbury was burnt in effigy in some part of England and his picture was pelted with rotten vegetables and eggs before being

committed to the flame. Fancy this happening in priest-ridden England! The trouble, it would appear, arose over the question of tithes, which has exercised the minds of people there very much of late. There is no reason to believe that the worthy Arch-Bishop is much perturbed over this. Like Henry IV of France Sur le Pont Neuf, he is keeping the best of health and is seeking every opportunity to announce that he is much alive and to justify his eminent position as the Head of the Church of England as by Law established. He is, in effect, very much in communication with God at present. He is offering prayers for the welfare of India, to have rains, to have peace, to guide Parliament in the right path and *by and bye he will bear the brunt of the celebrations in connection with the Silver Jubilee of their Majesties.* The poor hard-working man!

* * *

The Presidential Address of Dr. David Forsyth to the Section of Psychiatry of Royal Society of Medicine of London, has caused a stir in England. The subject was Psychiatry and Religion. The excitement against it was caused by the Times giving full publicity to it, and letters of protest followed (as is usually the case when Religion is attacked in England).

Dr. Forsyth quite rightly maintained that the so-called new spirit of toleration between Science and Religion, which led some people to believe that there was no inherent conflict between the two, was not supported by modern psychology. (We also have always maintained this). Psychology, he said, shows their incompatibility more than ever. Psycho analytic research, says Dr. Forsyth traces many religious ideas back to unexpected

sources in childhood. (This is especially true with Indians). Children learn their religious ideas about God, conscience and so forth from their parents. He said that belief in a soul and the hope of immortality was taken by Christians from primitive religions. Belief in a soul was general among savages and arose from dreams in which the dead were seen. Sexual feeling entered into some aspects of religion, and religious conversion represented a disorder of sexuality; in adolescents the new tide of sexual feelings, being checked in its usual course, was deflected into religion (See Havclock Ellis' Psychology of Sex). In it the readers of Reason will have a good idea why many girls become nuns and many boys become priests. All due to sexual disorders.

* * *

The most distinctive characteristic of religion, says Dr. Forsyth, was beliefs in the supernatural which Science had fail to discover. It was claimed that religion detected the supernatural world by mystical method which alone were suitable for things spiritual. If the Sensory world known to Science was real, why, it might be asked should not the spiritual world, known to religion, be real also? The reply of psychology was that all processes of thinking were of two kinds—pleasure thinking and reality thinking... Pleasure thinking was well known under the name of "imagination" and showed itself in dreams and day dreams. It was employed in all creative artistic work, but psychology allocated it to the world of fantasy, where the writ of nature did not run. The mysterious business of Gods and spirits was an example of childish projection (imagination) on a colossal scale.

It is announced that the Pope of Rome received the Maharaja of Patiala some time ago and conferred on him the Grand Cross of the Order of Gregory the Great. Who will say after this that Catholicism is not moving along? To confer a most exclusive Catholic Order on a Hindu is certainly a most unusual proceeding. It is to be hoped that the Maharaja will not take into his head some day to decorate the neck of the God Shiva with that showy decoration.

* * *

Just at the moment of going to press we notice that the Government of Bombay has issued a communique explaining clearly why it was necessary to adopt stern measures in Karachi against a fanatical Muslim mob bent on mischief. The circumstances which led to the firing are now well known, and every fair-minded person, not blinded by communal and religious prejudices, will admit that the authorities had to face a dangerous situation, the outcome of which could only result in appalling disaster. For weeks before the tragic episode, the fanatical passions of the mob had been inflamed by propagandists who generally exploit such occasions for their own ends. Bitter criticism has been directed against the Government for doing its duty; but no body has come forward to condemn the religious fanaticism responsible for this deplorable affair. The Government, in our opinion, did right in quelling such a fanatical demonstration. No civilized Government, determined to maintain Law and Order, could tolerate what took place in Karachi. Religious bigotry and intolerance are on the increase in India and unless stern measures are taken against this tendency the menace will soon grow out of control. The so-called leaders of communities must not be encouraged to foster the same.

INGERSOLL AFTER ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

The one hundredth anniversary in 1933 of the birth of Robert, G. Ingersoll is of interest to religious liberals. In his rejection of many specific elements of the Christian tradition, including a hell of terror, a cruel and vengeful God, the inerrancy of the Bible as a divine revelation, and the virgin birth, Ingersoll was doing exactly the thing that has consumed much of the time and energy of liberal ministers during the past century.

In many of our free churches there are laymen, and occasionally ministers, whose first break with orthodoxy came with the reading or hearing of his speeches. Yet, however widely read and appreciated by individual, Unitarians, Universalists, and other religious liberals, Robert Ingersoll has been praised and discussed by few publicly.

The reasons for the reluctance of the free-churchmen to recognize and openly acknowledge in Ingersoll a kindred spirit seems obvious. Ingersoll had both a constructive and a destructive side to his thought. But it was his fate to become known to the world at large chiefly for his negations. Controversy over his views simply drove him into preoccupation with the inconsistencies and myths of the Bible and of orthodox liberals. Moreover, those liberals were unprepared institutionally for a sympathetic understanding of his position in regard to the ideas of God, immortality, and the human soul. It was not then as generally recognized as it is now, that there can be religion without belief in God or heaven. It was precisely because Ingersoll went further in his critical examination of the materials of Christianity than did other liberals, and maintained an agnostic

position on these ideas to which the liberal theists found it necessary to cling, that he gained added ill-repute among the fundamentalist hordes. And the liberal churches had enough public disapproval to combat without taking on the added onus of any association with the name of Ingersoll. This status of Ingersoll as a man who out-heresied the heretics is well expressed in a story told recently by the editor of an urban paper in Illinois. The editor's mother was a devout Methodist of the old school, but his father had free-thought leanings and occasionally might be seen with a volume of "The Mistakes of Moses". On such occasion the good wife would exclaim with manifest disgust: "Oh, John. You and that old Ingersoll! Why, you are worse than a Universalist!"

Not a few of the rationalist admirers of Ingersoll seem also to have misunderstood him. These free-thought disciples have tried to present him as virtually an atheist. Yet nothing could be more explicit in all of Ingersoll's words than his discrimination between the vindictive God of Calvinism on the one hand, and on the other the God of evolutionary theism which the religious liberals of his time affirmed, and in regard to which he was agnostic, not atheistic. Thus he declared: "Let me say, once and for all, that when I speak of God, I mean the being describe by Moses.....the Jehovah of the Jews. There may be, for aught I know, somewhere in the shoreless vast, some being whose dreams are constellations and within whose thoughts the infinite exists. About this being, if such a one exists, I have nothing to say." This does not mean that Robert Ingersoll

affirmed or even admitted the probability of desirability of such a God. He stated that apparently the world is self-existing, that nature appears to be non-purposive and non-intelligent. But he spoke only of appearances, and in the end his answers to the claims of modern theism and his conviction concerning the ultimate nature of the world was neither an affirmation nor a denial; it was simply, "I do not know."

This agnosticism of Ingersoll's is essentially akin to the scientific method and temper which looks for facts with suspended judgment and an open mind. It did not admit the validity of the speculative or intuitive method by which the theists sought to rationalize their faith. Moreover, Ingersoll was consistent in his agnosticism in his views on immortality, saying, "We do not know, we cannot say, whether death is a wall or a door..." Likewise he readily admitted the lack of facts in his day in regard to personality. "We do not understand," he said, "the action of the brain. No one knows the origin of a thought. No one knows how he thinks or why he thinks, any more than he knows how or why his heart beats...." It may be that were he now alive the research of the last quarter century would let him speak a little more factually on these questions of physiology and psychology, but where mystery existed, he would still be ready to admit to lack of knowledge. The significant thing is that he did not allow himself to be swept by the exigencies of debate into negations where the facts did not permit negation. This position not only made him, as courageous as his more inconclusive admirers would like to have him, but it also made him more discriminating than they have often been in their interpretation of his theology.

Half-hearted Liberalism.

In another respect the friends of Ingersoll have failed to do him justice. Nothing is more frequently encountered in the ranks of anti-religious who claim Ingersoll as a hero than a combination of theological radicalism and economic and political reaction. These disciples lost sight of the whole man, and presented Ingersoll in as conservative economic garb as they themselves wore. There is a certain type of mind, not uncommon even in free-church circles, in which there seems to be a process of compensation taking place. Such thinkers apparently try to make up for their conservative position on things material by being quite heroic about things "spiritual." A curious acceptance of the dualism of the orthodoxy they pretend to reject is involved in this confining of their liberality and rationality to one but compartment of thought. It is economic and political thought and action which count most today, and no one, even though he calls himself a rationalist, can reasonably pretend to be liberal or rational who has not reasoned his way to a liberal position in these fields.

When we examine the attitude of a third group, we find that, as with the theists and rationalists, Ingersoll has not been fairly evaluated. This group is the humanist wing of religious liberalism, which might be expected to find in Ingersoll a forerunner, since it has most in common with him. Some of the older humanists, whose life and work has overlapped with his, have indeed spoken and have written enthusiastically about Ingersoll, but their stress was upon his place as a scourge of orthodoxy. And the younger humanists have expressed a marked disinterest in him.

For such reasons no more appropriate recognition of Ingersoll could be made in this year of his anniversary than to examine the constructive phase of his thought, which persons in all groups seem to have failed either to grasp or understand in discriminating manner.

**A Republican, but a servant
to no party.**

In the case of the younger humanists, as early as I can determine, the impression that Ingersoll in politics and economics was unprogressive, has been gained largely from the conservatism of some of his anti-religious followers. Moreover, for several of these humanists the fact that Ingersoll was a Republican has of late been sufficient condemnation. They have let that label alienate them without apparently observing that a Republican, let us say, of 1932 and a Republican of fifty or more years ago were quite different persons. They should not forget that the same label has been worn by men as different as were the elder Robert M. LaFollette and Henry Cabot Lodge. Moreover, Ingersoll's party loyalties were always subordinate to his conviction. If they had not been he would never have let his theological radicalism wreck his chances of high political office. A satirical editor of an Ohio paper wrote, a year or two ago, a subtle editorial purporting to give high praise for party loyalty to the senior Senator from his state, who was then the national chairman of the Republican Party. The Senator, he said, had followed his party loyally wherever it went. He had gone to the heights with it. And when it went down into the mire had had with canine fidelity, followed it there. When, for example, his party was for the World Court, he had been for it.

But when his party obstructed American adherence thereto, he also was against it. Such loyalty, the editorial declared, is rare and deserves recognition. And the editor, a Democratic partisan, chuckled over several letters from friends of the Senator, commenting the editorial.

There was none of institutional servility in Ingersoll. He was independent in spirit and placed conviction above all else, as in these words which remind one of Channing: "So far as I am concerned, I have made up my mind that no organization, secular or religious, shall be my master. I have made up my mind that no necessity of bread, or raiment, or roof shall ever put a padlock upon my lips. I have made up my mind that no hope of preferment, no honour, no wealth, shall ever make for one moment swerve from what I really believe." Ingersoll applied this attitude to his political affiliation, declaring that he was with the Republican Party only so long as it was going his way, and that if it ceased to go his way, he would leave it.

Ingersoll's starting point in his social, economic, and political views was the very one which unites all religious liberals, theist or humanist, today, namely, faith in human nature. The most important thing about Ingersoll, as of any other man, is not his political affiliation. Political parties can grow old. They can have their day and outlive their usefulness. But one's attitude toward life is basic. The attitude of religious liberalism that human nature is sacred, that life is worth living, and that the fearless and free pursuit of truth is the way to the abundant life for man, is a perennially inspiring conviction that bears fruit in different ways in different decades.

This attitude Ingersoll shared and affirmed. It is written in every line of his creed of science; it is found throughout all his published speeches. And it determined his attitude on social questions. His position is well illustrated by the following excerpt:—

Your views upon all such questions, will depend upon which side of human nature you stand,.....whether you are a believer in total depravity, or whether you think there is a little virtue in human nature. If you judge from the side of human depravity you can torture any act, whatever it is, into guilt. But you may judge from the other side and say that men as a rule are decent; that they would rather do a kind act than a mean thing; that they would rather tell the truth than tell a lie. I tell you today that there is an immensity of good in human nature.

Believed in gradual evolutionary progress.

It is, of course, purely a matter of conjecture as to what formal political affiliations Ingersoll would have made in the light of the events of the last few years. His measure of institutions certainly would have kept him moving forward in his views. We are less optimistic than was he in regard to the possibilities of gradual evolutionary progress. And he too would probably have distinguished more clearly between the ideas of evolution and progress. He was not a socialist. Three things, he said, would keep America from accepting extreme socialist views: freedom by which he meant the owning of a home and a job by the common man. What would he say to the record of continued

repression of civil liberties in the last few years? What would he say to the dispossession of homes and farms throughout the country? What would he say to unemployment on the part of millions? If some of us believe today that some form of socialization is necessary, it is precisely because we feel that the *laissez-faire* system of the past, or even the various proposals of the present for modifying and controlling the profit system, have failed and must necessarily continue to fail to maintain those three forms of freedom which Ingersoll believed to be enduring realities of our national life. If the process of gradual evolutionary progress which Ingersoll believed in has not come, it has been because freedom of speech and press have not been genuinely free, because progress won't just happen but must be planned for with the good of all as goal, and because economic security has broken down due to weaknesses inherent in an individualistic and profit-motivated society. Liberals who are reaching this conclusion today are doing so on the basis of experience in America since the war, whereas Ingersoll died before the turn of the century.

If Ingersoll was conservative, what manner of conservative would ask as he did: "Why should not the laborers unite for the purpose of controlling the executive, legislative and judicial departments of the Government? Will they never find out how powerful that are?" Capital, he pointed out, always claims the right to combine. "They call that changing ideas," he said, "but when labor tries to combine, they call it conspiracy. Manufacturers meet in clubs. The workers have to meet in empty lots and on the streets and then are attacked for sedition." Friendly towards the aspira-

tions of the workers and farmers and believing in their organization for their own good, Ingersoll saw and denounced the injustice of such class privileges. Justice was a religion to him. "Justice," he said, "is the only worship." And this worship of justice made him a foe of all slavery. He sought equal rights for the Negroes. He was against punishment of all kinds on the ground that it degrades and hardens and does no good. He believed in equal pay for women. Ignorance was to him a form of slavery, and he believed in education for all, education both for making a living and for living a life.

Ingersoll's sense of justice and his sympathy for the workers led him to recognize that the source of wealth is in labor and not in profits. He realized the injustice of human exploitation through which one man lives upon the labor of another, one class upon another class. Particularly, he decried exploitation through the ownership of tenements and of land. "A man should have no more land than he can use," was his position. The traffic in miserable tenements, he believed, put "a few in castles and many in prisons. Greed, he felt, knows no bounds, and the profit motive often leads to the most serious injustices and abuses. "Don't you know," he said, "that people would bottle the air if they could and allow millions to die for want of breath if they couldn't pay for it?" he believed in profit sharing, one of the panaceas advanced in his day, so that the worker would "mingle a little June with the December of his life."

Ingersoll was a searching critic of the very rich as well as a friend of the worker. He had a definite sense of both the uses and the limitations of wealth. He said of the rich that we have a right

to ask how they got their money and what they do with it. He saw that property owners were often owned body and soul by their property. "It is an insanity," he declared, "to get more than you want." The love of gold, he pointed out elsewhere, leaves nothing but sagebrush in the heart. "Why wear oneself out trying to get rich? Imagine a man getting up in the morning and owning a million suits, socks, neckties. What can he do with his surplus? Can he eat it? No. Can he make friends with it? No. Can he purchase flattery and lies? Yes. Can he let it torment him with worry? Yes. And he caricatures, with the same sardonic wit he used in tearing the Biblical myths to pieces, the rich man dying of apoplexy for fear he would not have enough neckties to last him through.

Ingersoll himself had little desire to be rich, and gave generously to many people and to many causes. He died with an estate of not over 10,000, in spite of his talents, which, if they had been used intensively for money-making, would surely have made him rich.

Ingersoll's social liberalism was not provincial. Despite his own army commission he was surprisingly broad in his international views. With all his eloquent praise of the soldier, he advocated disarmament and an international court. It may be said also of Ingersoll's social views, that they lack that type of radical class consciousness which indiscriminately finds everything and anything the rich do to be bad, and everything and anything the poor do to be good. It is apparent from an examination of his attitude toward labor, capital, wealth, and civil liberties that, for his own time, Ingersoll was as liberal in his social-economic views as any humanist should desire.

" Investigate, not follow "

Asked in the course of his lectures, " What do you give in place of what you tear down ? " Ingersoll would give some such simple answer as, " Well, in the first place I propose good fellowship.....good friends all around. No matter what we believe, shake hands and let it go. " But as we have seen, his positive beliefs went further than tolerance and fellowship. Beyond the social views of Ingersoll is to be found a set of values corresponding to the values of most religious liberals. They will agree with him that religion is a way of life and not a creed. They will be inspired by his wish to find joy here instead of yearning for heaven hereafter. They will agree with him that character-building is a supremely desirable end and a life work for the individual ; that happiness is the result of sane living : that the measure of right and wrong is in whether an act helps men to live happily here and now. His admonition, " Investigate, not follow ; Do not be cringers and crawlers, " his warning, " Do not throw away your reason to save your soul ; you will lose it, you will become an intellectual serf " these have their counterpart in the temper of our free religious fellowship.

If the writer of this article is at all critical of Ingersoll and finds his usefulness limited, it is because of limitations inherent in the piece of work he was doing, and the century in which he lived. At times his style seems over-ornate and the content somewhat unsubstantial. But one must remember that Ingersoll's collected works are chiefly transcripts of his public talks. In those talks he was speaking to the people at large in a tongue they could understand. We should not, therefore, go to him for all

the nuance of critical scholarship. But we can go to him and learn a great deal as to how to bring the liberal message to the masses. What is surprising is that so much of what he said was beautifully polished, clear and simple, yet musical and balanced in style, and that at the same time his assumptions and reservations, in the light of subsequent scholarship, have proved to be sound.

Ingersoll, the theological iconoclast, the world knows. The old errors needed and still need to be destroyed before a new structure of faith can be erected. The work of the wrecking crew is not yet completed. But what negative task is being done powerfully by the forces of research, by the regular classroom instruction of the great universities, by the press and other agencies of popular education which are making the results of research available to all who will think and read. The task before religious liberals today is the more constructive one of stimulating people to think synthetically, and of guiding their thoughts into patterns and toward values that will give life its needed purpose and zest.

Religious liberals have many reasons for honoring Ingersoll for his intellectual honesty and his fearless destructiveness where destruction was needed. But even more they should appreciate and make known to the world the constructive Ingersoll. This less-known side of the great orator was buried beneath the avalanche of protest which was released by his denial of beliefs almost universally held. It was hidden by misrepresentations which never succeeded in touching the personal integrity of life and motive that was his. This Ingersoll,

the lover of freedom, of justice, of humanity, and of progress, the man who found within the boundaries of the here and now ample reason for faith and joy in living merits high place among the heroes of religious liberalism. The constructive faith of Ingersoll has been summed up in sentences gleaned from his talks as follows:

Justice if the only worship.
Love is the only priest.
Ignorance is the only slavery.
Happiness is the only good.
The time to be happy is now.
The place to be happy is here.
The way to be happy is to make
other people so.

VIVIAN PHELIPS.

DID JESUS EVER LIVE ?

Between those who stoutly maintain that the figure of Jesus as we read of him in the Gospels and Epistles is a reality that cannot be disputed, and those who, on the strength of careful researches, totally deny that such a person ever existed at all, there is a very large number of people who take a middle view of it.

We are all familiar with the picture of Jesus drawn for us by many of his staunch followers—bishops, priests, parsons and other pious writers—who in their numerous works depict his life and teaching with a wealth of detail as if they, themselves, were his contemporaries. All these people derive their knowledge of him from the Gospels and Epistles alone as there is no other source of evidence about him.

Most of us have, probably, come across those country padres and their like who pour scorn on those who doubt the story of Jesus and their unwillingness to rely completely on the authenticity of the Gospels, their inspiration and so forth. For these people, of course, more zealous than intelligent, the existence of Jesus can be proved as easily as that of Napoleon or

King Henry VIII. They wither with their contempt those who timidly assert that the story is full of legends and may not be true in all its detail, and that the sacred writings have been probably manipulated to make it appear so. We are not concerned in this article with such witnesses. They are misleading as far as the earnest seeker after truth is concerned.

Nobody can arrive at a reasonable opinion on any subject unless both sides of the question have been carefully sifted, and this is precisely what the religious enthusiast never do. In the case of the Gospels, those who have studied it carefully with an open mind admit that complete reliance cannot be placed on them. It is evident that they were written long after the events they record and by people who certainly were not eye witnesses of what is recorded. At must, they were written by people who may have known some of the disciples of Jesus and at whose dictation they wrote. Even this is extremely doubtful.

However that may be, it is on this ground alone that many, while admitting that most of events recorded in these

Gospels are legendary and finely embroidered, there are others, they say, which strike one as being original and true and could not have been invented by the writers whoever they may have been. On this ground they are inclined to believe that such a person as Jesus existed, though they do not think he was a God. They believe that he was a religious reformer far in advance of his time and that it is quite possible that he met with a violent death at the hands of the orthodoxy of those days. It must be admitted that the question of originality has not now the force it once had. It is pointed out with a good deal of force that assuming that Jesus was a man, however gifted, it is only a logical proposition to say that if it was possible for him to have propounded certain doctrines, it is humanly possible for some other men to have propounded them in his name. It is simply idle to insist, as his followers generally do, that his disciples were all ignorant men.

Those who contend that the Gospels might have been written by clever people well versed in the ethical and moral teachings of their times point out that there is nothing unique in the teaching of Jesus. His ethical doctrines were no higher than those of Epictetus, Socrates, Gautama Bhudda or Confucius, and the character of his person could easily be drawn from such persons as Zoroaster, Rabbi Hillel, Apollonius of Tyana and hundreds of other religious teachers who preached lofty ethical doctrines long before Jesus.

It must, indeed, be admitted that there is nothing original in the teaching of Jesus as even the phrases and sentiments he is reported to have expressed were common to the priests of Isis, Serapis,

Apollo, Mithra, Ahura-Mazda and Jahaveh. It is to day common knowledge that the Golden Rule was enunciated by Confucius centuries before Christ. Mr. Hippolyte Rodrigues, as many others also have done, seventy years ago told us in his "*Les Origines du Sermon de la Montagne*" that the Sermon of the Mount is almost completely anticipated in Jewish Literature and many scholars have affirmed that even the Lord Prayer is also Jewish and Pro-Christian in origin.

Those who maintain that there is no certainty about what Jesus actually said or not, point to the contradictory nature of his alleged utterances.

It is hard to think that such sentiments as the following were expressed by the same person:—

"Who soever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire."

"Ye fools and blind" "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

"I say unto you, Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you."

"Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city" (A city which would refuse to hear his disciple and would persecute them.)

"Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans" (The Samaritans were the Hareians of those days).

"It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs".

"Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations".

At one time he told his disciples that whosoever lives by the sword shall perish by it and before the beginning of his passion ordered his disciples to carry swords as they would meet with resistance!

To the Samaritan woman at the well he declared that it was not necessary to go to the temple at Jerusalem to pray nor to the mountains or any where, but anyone could pray to God in his heart. At another time he is said to have founded a Church. Such contradictions abound in the Gospels.

Those eminent scholars like Drews, Smith, Schmeidel, Robertson, Couchoud, Dujardin, Rylands, to mention but a few who deny that Jesus ever existed point to the significant silence of the existence of Jesus in contemporary writers. They also contend that the Jesus cult was known and practised long before the advent of Christianity. This, as a matter of fact, can be traced in the mysteries and mysticism of such creeds as Gnosticism, Mithraism, Judaism and others which prevailed in Asia Minor long before Christianity came into existence. All scholars dwell on the legendary nature of the Gospel narratives regarding the birth and resurrection of Jesus. Mr. J. M. Robertson in his "A Short Story of Christianity, Watts, & Co., pages 12 and 13 draws attention to the manner the vigil, arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus as narrated in the Gospels. Mr. Robertson says that this is evidently not a narrative of real events which actually took place but a dramatic description of a mystery-play. Says Mr. Robertson:—"Anyone who will attentively follow the account of the Last Supper and its sequelae in the first gospel will see it reproduces a series of closely-

continuous dramatic scenes, with no room given to such considerations as would naturally occur to a narrator of real events, and no sign of perception of the extreme improbability of the huddled sequence set forth.....Jesus is made to take the Passover after dark; then to go forth in the night for no reason given with his disciples, who sleeps while he prays; then to be captured in the darkness by a multitude; then to be taken straight to the high priest 'where the scribes and elders were gathered together.' These now proceed, in the dead of the night, 'to seek false witnesses' and 'many false witnesses' come, to no purpose, till 'afterward' come two who testify to this words about destroying the temple; whereupon he is judged and buffeted, and the night's history ends with the episode of Peter's denial. No hint is ever given of anything said or done or felt by Jesus on the way from the Supper to the Mount, or in the interval between the Jewish and the Roman trials."

Readers who are interested in the subject would do well to read Mr. L. Gordon Rylands "Did Jesus Ever Live", Watts & Co. Mr. Rylands in a small work of 117 pages discusses the problem in a masterly manner. He stoutly maintains that Jesus never existed. One of the most interesting chapters of his book is No. vi "Jesus in relation to Evil Demons".

Mr. Rylands tells us that the prevailing beliefs before the time of Jesus were the activities of demons. They were believed to waylay the souls in their passage from Earth to Heaven and few or no soul escaped them. Jesus is believed to have vanquished them. Would this explain the intense joy of Christians

about Jesus? All their hymns and prayers express great jubilation at the mighty work of Jesus against the Devil and he is hailed as the Saviour of Mankind. Simple atonement for the so-called Original Sin would hardly cause such Joy.

It is remarkable that the object of Baptism, as "Louis Coulange" (who was a Roman Catholic priest) tells us in his "Life of the Devil" is to exorcise the Devil.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

"THE KORAN—WHAT DOES IT TEACH?"

In its issue for January 1935, *Reason* publishes an article entitled "The Koran—what does it teach?" by Ima Rebel. That it could have found access in the pages of any journal, much less *Reason*, is significant of the lack of requisite knowledge of the Koran. On reading the article one comes to the conclusion that it is more the product of an incoherent and spasmodic study of the pages of the Koran than of wilful misrepresentation of facts. Or it might as well be a mere reflection, a re-hast of the writings of European Orientalists with the exception that they express themselves in more dignified language.

A Muslim does not deny any one the right to criticise the teachings of the Koran. What he does not like is when criticism degenerates into flippant ridicule.

The main faults, besides the minor ones mentioned casually, which the writer of the article under discussion has enunciated, can be briefly stated as follows:—

1. That the Koran enjoins upon its followers to kill non-Muslims if they refuse to accept Islam.

2. That the Islamic conception of Paradise is sensual and that Hell, according to the Koran is a place of torment and torture.

3. That the Koran is full of inconsistencies.

4. That the Koran does not accord equality of rights to both the sexes and that it "sanctions slavery, polygamy and concubinage."

Because of lack of space at my disposal, I cannot deal adequately with all the misconceptions with which the article bristles. I cannot for the same self-reason go into the causes of those misconceptions either. I would, therefore, refer the reader for a further fuller study of the teachings of the Koran to "The Translation of the Holy Koran by Mahomed Ali, Lahore, 1934. Even so, there is one grave mistake which all the adverse critics of the Koran make. They get a warped conception of its teaching because they never study its various verses in their proper setting; because they tear them from their context. It is easy to understand what harm can be done by such a practice. The writer of the article in "Reason" is no exception to this.

Let us take his objections one by one.

The Koran enunciates a principle in Chap. 2 V. 256. It reads:—

"There is no compulsion in religion." It is full of statements showing that belief

in this or that religion is a person's own concern. We read: "We have shown him the way, he may be thankful or unthankful" (76:3; "If you do good, you will do good for your own souls: and if you do evil, it shall be for them" (17:7).

These verses should suffice to convince my readers that the teachings of the Koran champion freedom of thought. No doubt there have been wars in Islamic history. Why were they waged? Not to compel the unbelievers, non-Muslims to accept Islam or the Koran at the point of the sword. They were urged as a close study of wars of the Prophet and his successors would show, to establish religious freedom, to stop all religious persecution, to protect the houses of worship of all religions, synagogues, temples and mosques. The Koran expresses this idea in the following words:—"And had there not been God's repelling some people by others, there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered (22:40)" It was in self-defence, after having been mercilessly persecuted by their compatriots for over a period of 13 years, that the Prophet and his companions unseathed their sword. It is to this that the Quran refers in "Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and God is well able to assist them; those who have been expelled from their houses without a just cause except that they say, Our Lord is God (22:39 and 40). And fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, and do not exceed; for God does not love those who exceed limits (2:190)".

In the Koran fighting is only allowed either in self defence or to save a persecuted community from powerful oppres-

sors or against religious persecution. It has to be stopped as soon as any of the three conditions ceases to exist. The Koran says: "But if they desist, then God is Forgiving, Merciful. And fight with them until there is no persecution (2: 192 and 193)." The Koran also fosters peace even at the risk of being deceived by the enemy. It says:—"And if they incline to peace, do those incline to it and trust in God.....and if they intend to deceive thee, then surely God is sufficient for thee (8: 61-62)."

The waging of wars on unbelievers is a myth pure and simple. The condition which governed the decision for fighting by the Muslim is explicitly embodied in the words of the Koran: "and fight with those who fight with you (2: 190)." From the above remarks it should, I believe, be possible for my readers to understand that a spasmodic study of the Koran can do more harm than good. I would now show how distorted the judgment of Mr. Ima Rebel has become simply because he has isolated two verses from the context. He refers to Chapter 9, V. S. which reads: "And when sacred months are passed, kill those who join other Gods with God whereon you shall find them and seize them, besiege them and lie in wait for them in any ambush; but if they *repent* and keep up prayer and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way." I have underlined the word "repent" because the correspondent of "Reason" has for it "convert" which word is not to be found in the original text. As is evident, the sense conveyed by "repent" is contradistinct from "convert." As a matter of fact, it is in the word "Repent" that the key to an understanding of this verse lies. Just substitute "convert" for "repent

and the entire sense of the verse is changed.

Besides, he has missed the point of the verse because he has torn the verse from its context. If this verse was to be read along with the preceding and succeeding ones, it would be clear as the barn-door that the persons spoken in this verse are those who repeatedly violated their agreements and inflicted severe losses on Muslims by treachery. This verse, as Ima Rebel would have us believe, is not to be applied against all unbelievers.

If the Muslims or any other nation for that matter wants to exist, it has to punish such offenders.

The Koran, it will interest my readers to know, encourages peaceful relations with non-Muslims. It says "God does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of your religion and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly...(60 : 8)."

As to the Koranic conceptions of Paradise and Hell, it is strange to find what grotesque views are regnant about them. It is mostly because their knowledge is based on hearsay and because they have failed to remember that the things of the life here-after can only be described to us in language of the concept formed by us. A thing which We have not seen can be visualised by us through the help of such concepts as may resemble it. The Koran knew that people would make and as a matter of fact had been making the mistake of taking the description of the life here-after literally. It was for this reason that it remarked

- "A parable of the garden which the righteous are promised: there are rivers

of water (49-15)." Thus the description of paradise as a garden with rivers flowing in it is only a parable.

It makes it clear when it says that the blessings of paradise cannot be conceived in this life and are not, therefore, things of this world, in the verse "No soul knows what is hidden for it of that which will refresh the eyes (32 : 17)."

The Prophet Mahammad is reported to have said. "God says, I have prepared for my righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and what the mind of man has not conceived."

The truth of the matter is that ideas of bliss and happiness could only be conveyed to us through the help of ideas familiar to us. One can never form the real conception of the Islamic paradise if one took literally all the words used to portray it. The Islamic paradise is not sensual.

As to hell, the Koran says that it is a place of correction, not of torture; it is a place of purification, not of revengeful torment. It is a place where those who did not utilize the opportunities afforded them in their earthly life are made fit for spiritual advancement. It is for this reason that the Koran describes hell as "Maula" meaning friend (57. 15), as "Umm" meaning mother (101. 9). I need not emphasize the functions of a friend and a mother in the life of an individual.

In order to appreciate the real significance of the words describing life in hell of those who wasted their opportunities in this life, we have to remember the inevitable law under which every one tastes of what he has done. The words used by Quran to describe are no more terrible

and painful than the knife of a surgeon who has to amputate a leg to save the life of his patient. With all the fearfulness conveyed to us by various expressions on the idea of hell, God says that all men have been created for mercy. He says "Except those on whom thy Lord has Mercy and for this did he create them (11: 119)."

Another fault which is formed by its adverse critics with the Koran is that it is full of inconsistencies and is "an incongruous patch work." H. Herschfield in his "New Researches" says "The Koran is unapproachable as regards convincing power, eloquence and even composition. "Has ever" an incongruous patch work" in the history of mankind succeeded, to quote again from Hirschfeld's "New Researches", in leading a people more rapidly to civilization than was the Arabs through Islam"? The following quotations from Dr. Steingass's article contributed to the Dictionary of Islam by Hughes should come as a rude shock to "Ima Rebel."

"But if we consider the variety and heterogenousness of the topics on which the Koran touches, uniformity of style and diction can scarcely be expected; on the contrary, it would appear to be strangely out of place. Let us not forget that in this book, there is given a complete code of creeds and morals as well as of the law based therefrom. There are also the foundations laid for every institution of an extensive common wealth, for instruction, for the administration of Justice, for military organization, for the finances for a most careful legislation for the poor, all built up on the belief in the one God who holds man's destinies in His hand. When so many important objects are concerned the standard of

excellence by which we have to gauge the composition of the Koran as a whole must needs vary with the matter treated upon in each particular case. Sublime and chaste, when the supreme truth of God's unity is to be proclaimed; appealing in high-pitched strains to the imagination of a practically gifted people whom the eternal consequences of man's submission to God's holy will, or of rebellion against it are pictured. Touching in its simple, almost crude, earnestness when it seeks again and again encouragement or consolation for God's messenger and a solemn warning to those to whom he has been sent in the histories of the old. The language of the Koran adopts itself to the exigencies of every day life when this every day life in its private and public bearings, is to be brought in harmony with the fundamentals of the new dispensation.

The last but not the least concerns with the evergreen objection that the Koran sanctions slavery, polygamy and concubinage and also that it does not give equal rights to both the sexes. Here, again "Ima Rebel" is to producing the views of European Orientalists. To say that the Koran sanctions polygamy is to state a half-truth. It does sanction it but where and when? Besides it is a sanction, not an obligation. It sanctions it, but does not encourage it. Monogamy is the norm in Islam. In every society there do crop up exigencies, for instance as a result of war which decimates the male population, as a result of unexpected illness developing into an incurable disease of the wife that the law of polygamy is enuciated by the Koran comes into existence for the protection of widows and children in the one case, and for maintaining a high standard of morality in the other.

As to the equality of rights, the Koran says "women have rights similar to those against them in a just manner (2 : 228)." This verse establishes clearly the rights of women against their husbands to be similar to those the husbands have against their wives. It is wrong to say that Islam gives no right of divorce to the wife. No where in the Quran wife is described as "pollution" as Mr. Ima Rebel would have us believe. He has mistranslated the words, should I say? to suit his purpose. The word in the verse is AZAN meaning harmful and not pollution.

The Koran makes no difference between man and woman in the bestowal of reward of the good he or she does. It says: "I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other (3 : 144)." Both can rise to the same eminence morally and spiritually. It says "God has prepared for them (men and women) forgiveness and a mighty reward (33 : 35)."

On the material side, too, we find no difference except what nature requires for its own ends. A woman can earn, inherit and own property and does of it just as a man can,

The Koran does not sanction slavery or concubinage. Ima rebel has confused ownership of war with slavery. As to concubinage I find no verse in the Koran sanctioning it. Mr. Ima Rebel would excuse me if I say that he, as before, is making the grave mistake of regarding mistake of regarding the practices of some palaces in India or outside as based on the verses in the Koran.

ABDUL MAJID. M. A. B. T.

[We are sure that our readers will feel grateful to Mr. Abdul Majid for giving us an insight into some of the most interesting verses in the Koran. It is a pity that, except to learned Mahomedans, this book is little read and much less understood by the general public.]

ED. REASON.

IF WE SAW GOD !

An article in a recent issue of the *Methodist Recorder* asks, "have we ever thought what would happen if men saw God?" Well, what, in the Christian view, ought to happen? Christians are all the time singing of their desire to be at home with God, they invite the public to come to a revival meeting to spend an hour with God, they talk of eventually dwelling with God, they say they see the finger of God, or the hand of God in particular events, and then a leading religious journal asks what would happen if we ever met him, and doesn't appear

to be overjoyed at the prospect! What are they alarmed about? If I were a Christian and believed all I said—(but perhaps in that case I should not believe half what I said) I should look forward to the meeting with considerable joy, I should regard it as realization of all I had longed for. I should think it would be the end of my troubles, and the beginning of an existence made up of complete happiness. But the Christian does not seem quite so certain about it. He wants to put off that meeting as long as he can; and if a doctor to tell him that

he would soon be meeting his God, he would probably suggest to his medical man that a specialist should be called in to see if the two of them could not put off the meeting indefinitely. No insolvent debtor dreads facing his creditor so much as the Christian—all his hymns and expressed desire to the contrary—fears meeting his God. He has even a verse in the Bible to back up his reluctance, for that tells him that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Dead ones are harmless enough.

* * *

Gods And Ghosts.

Now I cannot understand, in the absence of certain conditions (I will name them presently), why anyone should dread meeting either a God or a ghost. Even when I was young I was anxious to meet a ghost. They seemed interesting things, and quite harmless. In fact one could see through them. At least I could see through them; but I noticed that it was just those who could not see through ghosts who were afraid of meeting them. But for myself I would just as soon spend an hour with a real ghost chatting about things, swapping experiences, and enquiring after departed friends as I would with an ordinary solid human being. And I have a strong conviction that any normal ghost would be much happier in my company, where he would be treated with ordinary decency, instead of being relegated to a dark room, draughty passage-ways and ruined houses, as is the custom. I do not wonder that ghosts are such infrequent visitors. They should be smiled, not shivered at. They should be given the most comfortable arm-chairs and not confined to gliding up and down passage-ways, or making spasmodic appearances in dark rooms.

And as to Gods, why should any person be afraid of meeting one? If he is our father what reason has a man to fear meeting his father—that is if the father is decent, and the son has done nothing to be ashamed of? Of course, there are fathers who are ashamed to face their children, and there are children who are afraid to face their parents. But, other things equal, I see no greater justification to fear meeting gods than there is justification for the silly fear of meeting ghosts. And in this matter I feel convinced that both gods and ghosts are treated unjustly. For ghosts evidently like human company; they seek it. A ghost with no audience to watch its capers would soon give up manifesting itself. Ghosts are most companionable; even those who shunned human company while alive, have shown an eagerness for it when dead. And as to Gods their dependence upon human company is complete. Hundreds and hundreds of Gods have vanished altogether because no one has tried to meet them, had no desire to live with them, and never invited a God to spend an hour with them.

* * *

Slandering God.

I think I can discern why a Christian should wonder what happen to him if he met God. The believer has a deal to answer for, and even the patience of God must have come near to breaking point when he considers what has been said. The believer and I are on different grounds. He has said lots of things about God and I have not. He has said things about God which I said about an ordinary man would have exposed him to an action for slander. The believer wrote a book that was filled with bad science, atrocious ethics, and fabulous history, and then attributed its author-

ship to God. He said that God sent the European War because the people had forgotten him. He told the mother who was weeping over a dead child, or the wife who had lost her mate that God had taken child and husband from them. He calmly declared that earthquakes and epidemics, and death-dealing storms, were acts of God, and he had the impudence to actually insert this slander in legal codes. He said that God moved people not to travel in a certain ship, but that God also left the other people to drown. It was the Christian, not the Atheist, who said these things of one whom he at the same time declared was the father of us all. All the Atheist asked for was some evidence that God had acted in the fashion described; he said that the principle of assuming an accused person to be innocent until he was proved guilty ought to apply to Gods as well as to men, and that the onus of proof rested with those who brought the accusation. The Atheist believes that even a God should have a "square deal." But when I look back at what the Christian has said about God, I am not surprised at his wondering what will happen if ever he and God meet. I do not know whether the Christian will ever see the hand of God, but if he does I shall not be surprised if soon after he feels his boot. The Christian has good grounds for thinking that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The Atheist can face the possibility without fear and with a considerable degree of curiosity. He would have a number of questions to ask, question which he has put time after time to those who claim to represent God, but which have never yet been answered. And if these were answered as Christians say they will be answered, by sending the questioner to hell,

then a self-respecting Atheist might well reply that between heaven and hell the difference is entirely one of geographical location.

* * *

What might happen.

But it is just possible that, if there is a God, he might meet these questions in a more manly way than Christians think he would. He would probably recognize that the Atheist is only using the intelligence that God had given him as best he could, and that if he did not use that intelligence in the right way, then it was Gods own fault that he did not give the Atheist a more satisfactory mental outfit. After all, the Atheist might say to God, "I am, oh Lord, as you made me. If you intended me to be different from what I am the fault is yours that I am what I am. You must either have intended me, or you have bungled me; and in either case the responsibility rests with you. If heaven is peopled with your successes hell is filled with your failures, and the question of 'why, if you wanted a better world, you did not make a better one, is a perfectly relevant one, and one that men in all the civilized ages of the world have asked without receiving an answer.'"

But it is likely that if God is up to the level of some of our best men, he may act differently from that pictured by the Christian. I can then imagine him saying:—

My son, you have asked me questions and I cannot answer them now. But it is within your right to ask, and one day you may hear the reply. For the present I ask to believe that in all things I acted for the best and if I have made mistakes they were not made deliberately.

Meanwhile, of all my earthly children you are the most welcome here. You and your kind have given me the least trouble, have asked for nothing, and if you have not beslavered me with fulsome praise, you have not loaded with undeserved blame. You have denied that I did anything, which relieved me of the responsibility for everything. You have withheld your praise for the same reason that you have refused to blame. You have been just because you have been impartial; you have been impartial because you have been just. You have not accused me of criminal neglect towards my own children; you have not said that it was I who have set nations by the ears, merely to gain a larger circle of worshippers. You have not said that I ordered old women to be burned or drowned because they had intercourse with the Devil, nor that I decreed the slaughter of many thousands because they could not believe the ridiculous stories my followers circulated about me. You did not credit me with being the author of the good that is in the world, but neither did you make me res-

ponsible for the evil. You merely asked for evidence before you expressed an opinion and passed sentence. And now you have questioned me with your head up your eyes open, and not with the dumb pitiful appeal of a dog begging for a bone.

I bear you no malice, and you have the full freedom of my domain. Sit thou on my right hand, and together we will judge those myriads who have called themselves my followers, whose compliments have been implied insults; whose every act of praise has been a disguised request for a dole, and whose conception of the human nature I created is that of something that can be led to decency only by a bribe, or frightened into it with a threat. I could not trust them to deal justly with you, but I think I may trust you to advise justly concerning them; and it may well be that one of the first favours you will ask of me will be that of dealing with these followers of mine as liberally as possible.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

In the Free Thinker.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To The Editor "Reason".

Sir,

Since Mr. Cedric Dover's article, republished in your March issue mentions me, I hope you will allow me space for the following remarks.

When he says that he knows of 'no work published in India that attains the standard of a thorough modern study'

he is evidently referring to works in English. Considering how small a proportion of the population English books can reach, this cannot be considered a great loss, apart from the fact that there are excellent books in English for those who can read them. It is propaganda through the vernaculars that is much more useful in India. In fact, I started my propaganda work with a pamphlet

in English fourteen years back, but soon saw that it would not be much good. About the vernaculars, your contributor has probably no first-hand knowledge though he mentions my Marathi monthly. I may mention therefore that besides my monthly, I have a small 12-anna book in Marathi on Birth Control, which is now in its sixth edition and was first issued in 1923. It gives all up-to-date information on the subject, besides dealing with the theory in all its aspects. It has also been translated into Hindi and Gujerathi.

Besides this, I am also running a Birth Control Clinic, first started in 1922,

which is being increasingly taken advantage of by all communities, except perhaps Mahommedans, who are in the grip of the purdah system. I make it a boast that I am supplying birth-control appliances at prices at which only propagandists can sell them and which make birth-control possible at Re. 1 per month on an average, with the most effective means known to-day. As Mrs. How-Martyn saw for herself when she paid me a visit. I consider it also a special merit that I offer birth-control advice to anybody who asks for it, without any restrictions.

R. D. KARVE.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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CONTENTS

	Page.		Page
Notes and Happenings	1	The Karachi Firing	14
The Future of the Churches in Europe	9	Religion and Freedom	
"Rama Rajya," C. L. D'Avoine		by J. Soares D'Almuda ...	16
by D. S. Desphande	12	An Interesting Debate	19

Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, The Editor "Reason," 3, Morland Road, Byculla, Bombay. For further information write to the Hon'y. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India, 41, Queen's Road, Bombay 2.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

A Parsi reader of our journal says that he is rather surprised that we found it interesting to comment in our last issue on the views of a Parsi correspondent of the Parsi Young Men's Association regarding some quaint religious and social customs of his community. He seems to think that there is nothing to be wondered at that the Parsi community is still very backward in this respect.

It is a fallacy, common to many, he thinks, that because many Parsis have adopted a Western mode of living to imagine that they have all become wonderfully advanced intellectually. It is not living in superb mansions, dressing fashionably, driving in costly cars and attending Europeanized social functions which indicate a real intellectual culture. He is, perhaps, right in

remarking that many of those who live this kind of life are the fortunate inheritors of rich ancestors who, themselves, made money mostly in commercial pursuits.

He believes that it is precisely, among these people, even more so than among the less fortunate members of the community, that a good deal of conservatism, narrow-mindedness and stupid superstitions are to be found. They cannot help it, he says, because their intellectual faculties are still lagging.

As regards the claim that the Parsis are better educated than any other community in India, he admits that it is so. But he puts this down to mere college education, and the object of taking university degrees and other academical distinctions is merely from a professional point of view and not for the sake of knowledge. Quite a fair number have a deep knowledge but take little interest in sound intellectual culture and are therefore unable to draw the inevitable inferences which sound knowledge alone can enable one to do.

Commenting on the grave communal riots which happened in many parts of India during the last Mohorram festivals and on the recent Kurrachi incident, The Times of India in a leaderette in its issue of the 18th April last, rightly deplores all these religious excesses and pleads for religious tolerance. "Recent disorders", says the Times, emphasise the need for a concerted attempt by leaders of public opinion to bring home to the masses the evil of religious intolerance"

The New Statesman, published in London, commenting on these religious disturbances and acts of fanaticism in India, also advises "Secularism" as a

remedy. What is "Secularism" but "Rationalism"? And yet when it suits their purpose these high brow papers affect to treat Rationalism with disdain! How is it possible to get "leaders of public opinion" to preach religious tolerance to the masses when it is precisely these people who are wont to pass as very pious people before the eyes of the masses. The recent Kurrachi incident showed this clearly enough when all these people were very ready to condemn the Government and not one of them condemned the act of that fanatic who was executed.

Here in India, as the late Queen Victoria in her diary says of the people Egypt, it is the pride of every individual to boast that he is a staunch supporter of religion. To be called religious is a high social ambition with most people here. Small wonder that such people affect to treat Rationalism with contempt. Were they intelligent, far sighted and less egoistic in their outlook they would have recognized long ago the potentialities of Rationalism and the power for good it is likely to have in a country like India.

If people who have the national cause at heart were to realize this, they would join the Rationalist Association of India by the thousand. It is a hopeful sign that His Enlightened Highness The Gaekwad of Baroda has recognised this and is doing his utmost to promote Rationalism in his State. He has even invited us to deliver a few lectures on Rationalism in his State which unfortunately we have not been able to do as yet

Who, after reading a lengthy letter in the Statesman of Calcutta of the 31st of March last, (which we reproduce

in this issue) will hesitate to say that only a sound Rationalism is capable of curing the religious madness prevalent in this country? It is strange that any religion can have the effect of "Cannabis Indica" on the brain as the religion of that correspondent seems to have on him. A religion which is intolerant of criticism to that extent is very dangerous indeed. Any religion that acts as a deliriant on the minds of the ignorant and the semi-educated should be dreaded.

* * *

(Under the heading "Revolting Superstition" The Bombay Chronicle of the 26th April last writes:—"While we entirely disapprove of Pandit Ramchandra Sharma's fast, (He fasted as a protest against the slaying of some goats as a religious sacrifice by some Hindus at Kalyan) it is a pity that despite it and the efforts in other ways by other persons to prevent it, the sacrifice did take place and goats and fowls were slaughtered it is said in their thousands. To sacrifice innocent animals to appease the wrath of a god or goddess is a revolting superstition. Such superstition can be eradicated not merely by eleventh hour propaganda by fasting and other forms of Satyagrah, but by systematic and continuous rationalist propaganda against every inhuman or irrational belief or custom."

While we cordially agree with this sentiment, we would like to ask the Editor of the Chronicle what has he to say against the practice of a certain creed which enjoins the slaughter of millions of goats and thousands of cows every year, on the occasion of a well known festival. Is not this also a horrible superstition?

* * *

The Anthropological Society of Bombay would seem to possess much leisure and patience to have wasted time in listening to a diatribe against modern knowledge by a Mr. R. K. Dadachanji. This gentleman is reported to have read a paper before the Society "on the truth of the ancient Platonic and Eastern religious theory of the soul as distinguished from the mind in the light of modern scientific psychology and psychophysics."

Though we are students of psychology and believe we keep fairly abreast of what is going on in this department of knowledge, we have not come across a single psychologist of repute who claims that psychology has recognized the Platonic and Eastern religious theory of the existence of the soul.

* * *

According to that theory the soul exists as a distinct entity from the body which it quits at death. Has this mysterious existence been ever demonstrated? What is the soul? Mr. Dadachanji who seems to be a credulous sort of a person, perfectly innocent of what modern knowledge teaches on the subject, would be hard put to tell us what he understands by "Soul" and how psychology proves that it exists. The belief in the soul is, of course, a religious one based on erroneous ideas of the phenomena of life, and no scientific body in the West would waste time in discussing the theory of its existence.

* * *

Three books of The Thinker's Library Series issued by Messrs Watts & Co, London, for The Rationalist Press Association, are of outstanding merit, viz: "Letters on Reasoning" by John. M.

Robertson, "Religion of The Open Mind", by A. Gowans White, "Social Record of Christianity, by Joseph McCabe. In The Forum Series, Messrs Watts & Co have also issued a booklet on "Darwinism And Its Critics" by Prof: Sir Arthur Keith M. D., F. R. S. who smashes those ill-informed critics of Darwinism like Sir Ambrose Fleming, Mr. Arnold Lunn, Mr. G K Chesterton, Captain Bernard Acworth, and the Jesuit Father Woodlock. The last named, Sir Arthur dismisses in a few words as he considers him "an ignorant priest" who meddles in such scientific questions.

Mr. Mc Cabe's book is an illuminating one regarding the failure of Christianity in the Social sphere.

* * *

On the 12th of April last, Lord Marley, Chief Opposition Whip in the House of Lords, during a debate on China held by the London Lyceum Club Debating Society, said that the missionaries had secured their footing in China by "one of the most fraudulent international acts the world has ever known" This, he declared, was a treaty which was written in French and Chinese. It was drawn up, he says, by a Roman Catholic priest and the agreement of the Chinese had been secured that the French version should be the definitive language in the interpretation of it. A clause was included in the French version which did not exist in the Chinese version to the effect that missionaries should be entitled to hold land in China.

Despite the evident absurdity of it, there is still a number of men and women of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches who

seriously imagine that they are going to convert the world in obedience to a so-called divine command in the Gospels. Their efforts in Africa, India and China have, so far, been a dismal failure. It is among the half-starved and down trodden classes that they have succeeded in making a few converts, of the bread and butter type, and it is by means of such social works as providing hospitals dispensaries and schools that they have attracted these people. These missionaries are always well provided. The Government helps them and silly old women, with more money than brains, are always found to provide them with money to carry on their work. As far as India is concerned they may keep on wasting their time as no or few Mahomedans will ever become converted to Christianity and the Hindus of the better classes only treat them with tolerance and indifference. In Africa most observers agree that these Missionaries are a nuisance and that they generally succeeded in spoiling the natives that are unfortunate enough to fall under their sway.

* * *

The debate held under the auspices of the Rationalist Association of Indian and the Rationalist Youth League at the Blavatsky Lodge last month proved a great success. More than three hundred persons took a great interest in it. The discussion was "Whether Science or Religion has done more for progress."

* * *

Members will oblige by sending contributions to "Reason". It is most difficult to carry on the way things are going at present. Why this apathy and indifference?

* * *

The two articles by Mr. M. V. V. K. Rangachari. B. A. of Cocanada

on "Relativity of Ethical values in Bhagavad-Gita" published in "Reason" in the December 1934 issue and that of March 1935 have been reproduced by the theistic journal Kalyan Kalpataru of U. P. in its annual Gita Number.

Mr. Rangachari, who is doing important work in South India in the

cause of Rationalism, is at present working on the Gita and the so-called Sanatana Dharma based on it.

Mr. Rangachari has the advantage of being a learned Sanskrit Scholar and his articles on Hinduism are always read with interest.

NATURE IN BHAGAVAD-GITA.

The place of God (Purushottama) in the Gita is a complex problem. We are grateful to Basanta Kumar Chatterjee for the comparative study on the subject with reference to the Upanishada and the commentaries of the well-known Acharyas. (See Kalyana-Kalpataru, February 1935, pp 285 to 290.) It has been shown that Sankara, Ramnuja, Madhava, and Sridhara have each propounded a different type of cosmology and explained the position of Iswera, Brahma or God in relation to the universe in conformity with his own system. That the Gita harmonises the preexisting systems of Indian Philosophy is well recognised. We find support for the theory of atomic-agglomeration (Arambha = vada) as when we read: "Matra sparsastu Kaunteya sitashna sukha duhkha dah : (Gita, 11, 14, the contacts of matter, C, Kaunteya, giving rise to cold, heat, pleasure, pain &c), for the doctrine of illusion (Vivarta-vada) which is expressly mentioned as in: "Mama maya duratyaya" (My power of illusion is impenetrable), and also for the law of evolution (Parinama-vada) as when it derives from the unmanifest-nature (Avyakta-Prakriti) the eight manifested-natures (Vyakta-prakrities,

Gita, VII, 4), the modifications or Vikaras (Gita XIII, 6, 7) and the Gunas or qualities (XIV). The grasp of the Gita is thus encyclopedic, covering the atomism of the Nyaya Vaisoshika schools, pointing the road to Buddhism and allied thought, as well as the Maya-vada of the Vedanta school, alongside the evolutional classifications of the Sakhya System, supplemented by the pervasive Yoga-discipline. In fact, the Gita reproduces *en bloc* most of the vocabulary of the Sutras, of Badarayana or Vyasa (Uttara Mimamsa) Gaimink (Purvamimamsa) Gatama (Nyaya) Kanads (Vaiseshika) Kapila (Sankhya) and Patanjali (Yoga). The profound respect that attaches to Gita is in the main due to the fact that while incorporating the divergent principles of the differing systems of philosophy, it epitomises the knowledge derivable from the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Sutras.

The Gita enjoins selection from among the Vedas. It has no regard for the mere logician exercising himself on the letter of the texts (Vedavadaratah, 11, 42) whose flowery speech it condemns as foolish. Just as a tank in a place covered all over with water, even so are the Vedas useful to an enlightened man.

(Yavanardha udapane sarvatah samplu-dedake, tavan sarveshu vedeshu Brahmanasya vijanatah, II, 46). The Gita recognises: the fact all-too-patent that Srutis and the Smritis are manifold and divergent. (Rishibhir bahudha gitam chandibhir vividhah pradhak, XIII, 5). Amid the clash of argument, and the the conflict of doctrine, the Gita leads the way to respectful understanding, and helpful assimilation, Perhaps its service lay in the ability to find place for Iswera and rescue Kapila Sankhya and allied philosophical thought from its logical if atheistic implications.

Even Gaimini's Purva Mimamsa does not strictly require the presence of God. The works themselves produce their fruit. "For the moral government of the world, according to Gaimini, no Lord is wanted (The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, Max Muller, p. 211) "Gaimini would not make the Lord responsible for the injustice that seems to prevail in this world, and hence reduced everything to cause and effect and saw in the inequalities of the world the natural result of the continued action of good and evil acts. This surely was not atheism, but rather was it an attempt to clear the Lord from those charges of cruelty or undue partiality which have so often been brought against Him." (ibid) In clearing God of the taint of injustice, Gaimini is apparently more loyal than the king, and more divine than God. Karma the religious counterpart of the principle of causality rules supreme. Good works like sacrifice (Yegna) charity (dana) and austerities (tapah) produce automatically their fruits.

Kapila-Samkhya saw through the futility of postulating an Iswera, who could not be held responsible for the

production of effects from causes, The Samkhya Sutras expressly declare that the reward of every work done does not depend on any ruler of the world. "The works themselves are working on for ever more" Max Muller's Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 330). "If it were otherwise, we should have to ascribe the creation of the world with all its suffering to a Lord who is nevertheless supposed to be loving and gracious". (ibid). It is only the self deluded by Ahamkara egoism) imagines that he is the operator. All action are produced by the qualities of nature only. (Of. Gita, III, 27, Prakritich kriyamani gunaih karmani sanvasah, Ahamkara vimudhatma kartahamiti manyato.) Again:

Sadrusam chestates vasyah prakriter gnanavanapi Prakritim yanti bhutani nigrha kim karishyati (Gita, III, 33)

(Even the man of knowledge acts up to his nature, all beings follow nature. Restraint avails not.)

True knowledge discloses that it is nature alone that acts. All else is actionless.

Prakrityaivacha karmani kriyamanni sarvasah Yah pasyati tathatmanam akartaram sapasyati (Gita, XIII, 30)

He who sees that matter truly performs all actions, and the Self as being actionless, he sees the truth.)

"Nature will constrain thee" (Prakriti stram niyekshyati, XVIII, 59) is the soundest warning ever uttered. Samkhya endows nature (prakriti) with a reality, which entangles Purushas (the selves) which are a plurality. Viveka (discrimination) enables a self to become independent, (Kaivalya). The Yoga. Patanjalas resort to the expedient of super

imposing an Audi-Purusha (First Self). Devotion to this Purushottama is one of the modes of attaining Samadhi among the Upayas (practices) mentioned in the Sadhana Pada. thus understand why Patanja-Yoga is named Seswera-Sankhya (i. i. e. Samkhya with God). To one acquainted with the evolution of philosophical thought in the country, the Purushottama Yoga (Chapter XV) of the Gita will readily appear to be the crowning act of superimposing the Supreme Being (Aadi Purusha or Purushottama) upon the diversified cosmology of Kapila-Samkhya detailed in the two preceding chapters. If plurality of Purushas (selves) is the reproach of the Samkhya system, the hypothesis of a Supreme Self unattached to causality, and unconnected with the flow of events is not more logical. Human intelligence requires a Lord at once responsible for and unrelated to the universe.

A good deal of confusion is brought in by the free use of metaphor and personification. Nature is spoken of as the womb. "Etadyonini bhutani Sarvani tyupadharaya" (Prakriti, nature is the womb of all beings, VII, 6). Mama yonir mahod Brahma (The great Brahma is the womb, or the organ of birth, XIV S). The concepts of Brahma, and Purusha in the Gita are interesting study. Even from the layman's point of view, nature refers back to an agent wielding or possessing such nature. Power implies the potency referrable to a being. An abstract quality or nature is incomprehensible except as inherent in some concretised concept. The doctrine that a thing and its power are the same is often lost sight of. (Sakti saktimaterabhedah. We raise the power to a point of personified dignity, lift it up to into an entity, and seek to differentiate it

from the concept whose power we seek to postulate.

It has been observed (Nalyana Kalpataru, Vol, 2, p 289) that in the Upanishads also, a Being superior to Brahma is spoken of, where Brahma has been used to mean the power of God. When we speak of our nature we do not ordinarily mean anything different from ourselves. But when we deal with the concepts of divinity and his Nature, we differentiate : between Iswera and the Prakriti, or Brahma.

What is the significance of this Brahma? "Tasam Brahma mahad yonih" (Brahma is the great organ of birth, Gita, XIV, 4). This Brahma is referred to as the high Bhuta (V, 24, Brahma-bhuteadhighatchati, goes to the eternal element'. Brahmi-stitih (the eternal element), Brahmi-stitih (the eternal state) occurs in II, 72. Brahmabhutam akalmasham (sinless, and of the eternal element) VI, 27. Brahma-bhutam, prasnmatma (XVIII, 54 merged in the eternal element, and calm in the Self; these expressions indicate that Brahma is supposed to stand for a kind of super-element above the five lower elements rather than the proper name of a Personality. Bhuta-Prakriti (material being in XIII, 35 and Jivabhutam (world of life) in XV, 7 also support the impersonal view of the concept of Brahma, as a super-sensuous principle subtler than the known elements of fire, air, water, the earth and the sky.

In the sloka : Abrahma bhuvanalloka (VIII, 16) the reference to the Brahma-loka, or the world of Brahma is more logically consistent with the stage of evolution in the order of the Brahma-life, than with a supposed upper world where Brahma sits on the Throne-

Getting rid of the figures of speech which often hinder rather than help the correct understanding of a philosophical concept, by focussing attention on non-essential analogies, we may conclude that Brahma is *per se* Nature as one sees it. To the scientist of to-day let it stand for electro-magnetic or radio-activity.

To the sages of the Gita and the Upanishads, it stood for that distant borderland between the abstract, universal, concept-ridden existence (Tatsat) and the beginnings of the formulation of a concrete individualised phenomenon (the Asat.) While the former is Akshara immutable in-destructible, the latter is Kshara (destructible.)

The reference to both Kshara and Akshara as Purushau (men) is the usual practice of personification, as when a ship is called "she" and the pet animal is given the proper name of a human being. In XV, 16, the words "dvavimau purushau loke" are best translated by Dr. Besant thus: "There are two *energies* in this world", and Purusha meaning energy fits best with my thought.

Nature is the source of the principle of causality. Karya karana kartritve hetuh prakritirutyate (XIII, 21). There is no principle higher than nature

(prakriti) that may explain the phenomena of the universe. If we need not lift up the veil off nature, and pry behind, as perforce we may not be able to, we have the assurance of the Bhagavad-Gita, that along with Purusha, Prakriti is the eternal twin-sister.

Prakritim Purusham chaiva vidhya-
nadi ubhavapi

Vikaramscha gunams- chaiva vidd
hi prakriti sambhavan (XIII, 20)

Know that nature and self, matter and spirit, are both without beginning. And know also that modifications and qualities are all born in nature.) When we seek to probe further behind, we forget that we are embarking upon the task of defining that which it is agreed on all hands should eternally remain undefinable. However imperfect in its goal, Kapila's Samkhya is the longest rope given to human understanding, and beyond the knowledge conveyed by chapters XIII and XIV in the Gita about his system, there is no higher form of knowledge. (Gnanamuttamam, XIV, 1)

Is it any wonder that the Gita places Kapila as the first among the Sidhas, the foremost liberated among the sages? Of the perfected, the Muni Kapila, Sidhanam Kapila munih (Gita. X, 26).

Cocanada, M. V. V. K. Rangachari.
13-3-1935.

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCHES IN EUROPE.

One by one the countries of Europe are shaking off Christianity. This fact has now become so evident that the churches are talking of uniting and are doing their level best to revive the dying creed. First France discountenanced religion officially. Then came Portugal, Spain and Russia. And now it is the turn of Germany to renounce Christianity wholesale.

This growing disownment of Christianity may be said to be general in Europe, though countries like England, Ireland, Italy and Czecho-Slovakia, for political ends, still continue to give State support to that creed. Even in those countries the slump against Christianity has set in in earnest as the better *informed are no longer attracted by it*. In England we hear daily of diminished Church attendance and the question of empty pews is sorely disturbing the confidence of the clergy. Despite their effort to stem the tide such as making Sunday observance more rigid, the service of the Broadcast to popularize religion, a more attractive form of services, less boring sermons, advertisement and a denunciation of Materialism among other things, the people keep away. While this indifference is spreading among the masses, the more enlightened are no longer interested in the supernatural claims of Christianity.

In former Catholic countries like France and Spain, great efforts are being made to re-conquer the position and to combat the apathy of the people. In France, especially, these are very noticeable due, probably, to the fact that anti-clericalism there is not as aggressive as it was before the Great War. This more tolerant attitude, one may even

call it a laissez-faire policy, is put down by priests as a sure sign of return to Catholicism and this belief seems to give them great hope and courage.

While education in France is no longer in the hands of priests and nuns, the clergy is allowed much more freedom than before and a good deal of their activities, which on a strict enforcement of the present laws would be considered illegal, are quietly tolerated. Cardinal Verdier is actually one of the most popular figures in Paris.

In the rural districts, Catholicism is still pretty active and to this, doubtless, is due that such celebrations like the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, Rogation-days and other festivals still meet with a great success in France. It is for this reason that those people who get their inspiration from religious publications are loud in asserting that religion is rapidly reviving in France and that the Great War has shown the people their grave mistake. This is not true. People who talk like this do not know the real nature of the French on religious questions. In France, people are only hostile to religion as soon as it interferes with politics. For the rest they look upon it with indifference and are not concerned with the interest the masses take in it. As regards the masses, it must be remembered that France is a country of 40 millions inhabitants and one does not expect that all these people have suddenly become free thinkers. The truth is that in France as in other countries, it is not possible to educate everybody on the same level. Many people who are now practising religion were in their young age educated by priests and nuns, and it will take time before secular

education enlightens the masses properly and lessens their priestly views on the theory of things.

In Spain, the revolt against the Church is not due altogether to the same causes as in France. The people there are far more ignorant than the masses in France, and their general tendency is for superstition. Religion, therefore, is naturally attractive to them, especially to the women. Their quarrel with the Church was mostly of a political and economic nature—a fact clear enough to the enlightened but not to the ignorant masses. In such a country a reaction in favour of religion is quite possible. The Church knows it and is actively at work, through the women, to reinstate religion. The educated, however, have lost their confidence in a Church that is justly held to have been the cause of the downfall of their country. Such by the way, is also the case in Mexico where the ruling classes have a deep aversion to Catholicism. This deep seated revolt against the Church in Catholic countries is not due, as the religionists put it, to a temporary aberration, but to a permanent alienation from a Church which has been weighed and found wanting. One can safely prophesy that it is only a question of time as education spreads to see the grip of the Church on those countries slacken more and more. It may not be out of place here to remark that the alienation of Catholics from the Church is not of the same nature as the indifference of the Protestants to their Churches. Once a Catholic has severed his connection with the Church, if this severance is due to enlightenment, he ceases completely to have anything to do with it. He looks upon its teaching as pure superstition and there the matter ends. The reason for this is that the dogmas of the Catholic Church are hide

bound and cannot be reconciled with modern knowledge. Those of the Protestants are elastic enough to be stretched even to breaking point, to accomodate lukewarm believers. To revert to the position of the Church in Catholic countries, one must mention Italy. That country would have followed the way of France, Spain and Portugal but for the pact of Mussolini with the Pope. This dictator, who was himself a Socialist and a Rationalist, has thought fit to come to terms with the Church. Whatever may be his political motives in doing so, there is no doubt that he has done a great deal of harm to the cause of free thought and liberty of conscience by the liberal concessions he has given to the Church. By landing education in the hands of the clergy Mussolini has done incalculable harm and this act alone will retard progress, at any rate intellectual progress, for generations. This will retard the religious emancipation of that country and give a longer lease of life to the Church of Rome which has its seat in that country. However, if intellectual evolution follows a natural course, Italy, in the end, must follow the other Latin countries in repudiating a religion which has been justly recognized not to be a power for good. In Czecho-Slovakia also doubtless for political ends, the Church of Rome has been officially encouraged to do very much as it likes. Already people there are groaning under its sway and they are bitterly experiencing what it is to be under a despotic power as that Church can be where it reigns supreme.

It is to day an admitted fact that the power of a creed in any country is not exactly due to the belief of the people in it. Political and economic considerations have more to do with it than its accep-

tance as a creditable doctrine. We saw this in the past during the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism.

The Northern countries of Europe, including England, adopted Protestantism not because one and all were convinced of its truth, but because their princes elected to adopt that creed. The opposite took place in countries which remained Catholic. Since then, people adhere to a creed in imitation of the ruling power, it is interesting to see what has happened in Russia. That country decided to reject Christianity completely and adopt Atheism instead. The experiment has been a huge success despite all we hear to the contrary from interested parties, who naturally view with horror the encouragement of what they call a "godless" doctrine. The success which Russia justly claims is in the increased percentage of literary. Under the Tzar the percentage of illiteracy was 93 per cent. The people were besotted, superstitious, intemperate and ignorant. Now we hear of the opening of schools and museums every where. Education has become compulsory; people are taught the evil of superstition, and the advantage of a scientific and rational education.

It is stated that the Soviet has forcibly closed down the Churches, and that people are prevented to worship as they like. This alleged interference with the liberty of conscience and freedom of thought has been strongly condemned and indignantly denounced by the religionists, and even by many Freethinkers also. As regards the religionists, they forget that they themselves adopted similar methods when they could enforce them. The Church of Rome, especially, introduced the infamous Inquisition for the purpose of enforcing its doctrines and compelling belief. No

Rationalist, of course, would dream of arguing that because Christians penalized and persecuted unbelievers Russia is justified in treating Christians in a similar manner. Two moral wrongs do not make a moral right. But in our opinion, Russia is right in completely closing the religious schools. It is the duty of the State to protect the children from harmful influences. No country can ever expect to free itself from debasing and demoralizing superstitions as long as the children are educated by priests and nuns. The experiment of Russia will certainly be watched by other nations, and it is possible that in years to come if excellent results are obtained from it they will adopt it without ceremony.

As it is Germany is trying to imitate Russia though with a different aim. We hear that Hitler and his associates are trying to repudiate Christianity and introduce the old Nordic paganism to regenerate the German race. With this object in view they are also interfering with scientific and freethought associations. The whole scheme sounds idiotic enough and one can safely predict a dismal failure for this ridiculous attempt. The surprising part of it is that this Anti-Christian movement has so far met with little or no resistance. Are we to conclude from this that in Germany also people now care very little for Christianity?

How do the pietists view this universal dissatisfaction against Christianity? As usual they will tell us that it causes them no misgivings and they are sure that in the end Christianity will triumph as it has done scores of times before. As a matter of fact, Christians are fond of arguing that ever since the beginning

of its career Christianity has had to face many fierce storms but in the end it has always emerged triumphant. If they really hold this erroneous view it only shows how blind they are and how unsafe is their childish complacency.

It is true that from the beginning of its career Christianity has weathered many storms. But what kind of storms where they? They were mostly domestic quarrels on doctrinal points and heresies. In the main, it was really the stand of one superstition against others. They were all like savages fighting with bows and arrows and never had the occasion to face or use modern weapons. It is the first time since it has come into existence that it has encountered such an attack and, as was to be expected, it could not resist the onslaught of modern arms. This time it has met modern Rationalism and it has not taken long to recognize in it a different foe altogether. "Modern Rationalism"

Says Mr. A Gowans Whyte in his "Religion of the Open Mind," "is not merely a renewed phase of old scepticism. It is much more formidable in its direct offensive on critical grounds; and it finds the promise of permanency through its bond with constructive science. This combination of frontal and flank attack has forced theology to do what it never did for the pioneer heretics; that is to say, to retreat and to admit its retreat." The Churches fought against Higher Critics until the scholar's views of the Bible could no longer be denied.....They fought against the lessons of geology and biology (one may also add Astronomy) until it was realized that antagonism would be more deadly than submission." On the whole the Churches have been vanquished and, to day the thoughtful view Christianity merely as an Oriental Superstition which must inevitably take its place in the cemetery of dead creeds.

C. L. D'Avoine.

"RAMA RAJYA."

I would recommend to all who speak and write in pious praise of the Ramayan and like works to read an absorbing little book entitled 'On RAMA-RAJYA Etc.' by S. D. Nadkarni (published by the Samaj Samata Sangh of Dadar, Bombay).

I had seen this book reviewed in the papers several months ago and though I had wished to order a copy I forget about it. It was in a shop in the Congress Exhibition grounds at Worli that I saw it copies and bought one. As it happened that I finished reading the book at about the same time I read Mahatma Gandhi's latest statements on what he calls the true Varnashram and

the position of women in it in the *Harijan* of Sept. 28 and Oct. 12, I ordered a copy of the book to be sent to Mahatmaji, and am awaiting his views on it.

The book is, as its author calls it, "an Expostulatory Letter to the Greatest Hindu" (meaning Mahatmaji) "from a Critical Co-religionist" (that is, the writer of it). It is in reality a reply to a set of apparently influential people like the Shankaracharyas etc. who met in a Conference some years ago, and declared for "Swaraj as we had it in the days of Ramchandra" and also for certain other things which showed quite clearly the nature of the Swaraj or

'Ram-rajya' which they wanted. But it is not equally clear why Sjt. Nadkarni has chosen to address his 'expustulation' (or rather indictment) not to any of those estimable folk, the real defendants in the case, but to Gandhiji, unless it be that he regards him as a judge, and then, too, as one known to have betrayed an, injudicial leaning towards the 'Rama-rajists' by certain of his utterances, particularly one expressing approval of Rama's abandonment of his wife Sita.

In the book are discussed with a critical detail and scholarly documentation, rare in these days of hurry and superficiality, what are called the three "blots on Rama's escutcheon", viz. the assassination of Vali, the abandonment of Sita, and the decapitation of Shambuk,—besides two other episodes, viz. one from the Mahabharat about how Dronacharya caused Ekalavya to cut off his own thumb to offer him as *dakshina* (preceptor's fee), and another from the Shrimad Bhagavat relating to the Vaman Avatar. After subjecting these time-honoured stories ("skeletons in the cupboard of our heritage", as they are called in the book) to a close examination both ethical and literary, Mahatmaji's expostulator goes on to consider the broader question of Varna, Ashram women's position, Ahimsa, sectarianism etc. I am particularly interested in the first-named subject. I find that some of the points brought up by Sjt. Nadkarni on the head are answered explicitly or implicitly in Mahatmaji's latest statements on the subject; and it seems only fair to his expostulator as well as to him to say that the latter has conceded most of the former's position already. But the

points raised on the question of Varna and Heredity on pages 52f. of the book call for an answer, and I am anxious to know what Mahatmaji has to say on them.

I must confess, however, that I at first found it hard to accept many of the statements that Sjt. Nadkarni makes in the book. But as there is an engaging ardour in the argumentative parts of the book, and a challenging sincerity is apparent through the whole of it, I marked some passages for verification, though I could not impugn off-hand the authenticity of any of them. I have been enabled by now to verify most of them to any satisfaction. I must say, however, that I have as yet hardly got over the disagreeable shocks I felt in reading certain portions of the book, in spite of its fascinating style. That is why I am as eager to know what Gandhiji has to say in reply to the Expostulatory Letter to him, as I was to read its pages.

I do not claim to know the author of this "Rama-tajya". But the occurrence of certain expressions in the book, such as "Rama's Monkeys' Raj" for British rule (pp. 30 & 58), the description of Clive as "the forger and founder of the British Empire in India, ... who died by his own hand" (p. 4), and the story about Miss Katherine Mayo being the Kaliyug Avatar of Sita (p. 10), confirm me in my conjecture that it must be the gentleman of the same surname whom I met in a railway carriage between Bangalore and Belgaum in the Christmas week of 1927-28, I saw him engaged in a lively discussion conducted in Sanskrit with the Mysorean astrologers. I was informed on enquiry that he had been a Shastri in a Pathshala somewhere on the

Konkan coast. I even remember to have tried to make fun of the debaters in Sanskrit by asking them whether it was 'Sanskrit' i. e., cultured or lawful) to talk in Sanskrit in a railway carriage in the presence of Mlenchhas, but the Mysoreans jokingly assured me that the old rules, if there were any against such conduct, did not bind them any longer, since their friend (Sjt. Nadkarni) had made a new Smriti which abrogated all the old ones! I then asked if the Kaliyug had ended for a new Smriti to be made to supersede Parashara's which is believed to be the Smriti for this Yug'. The ex-Shastri said that it was Gandhiyug now, Kali-yug having ended with the coming of Miss Mayo, and on being asked how, he told me that quaint story retailed in the footnote to page 10 of this book.

Be that as it may, I would fervently appeal to all Hindus who are not incapable of thinking for themselves, or who can keep their minds open to fresh light, not to fail to read this most stimulating book. No doubt, in spite of its engaging style, it may give rude shocks to the self-complacency of some.

But seekers after Truth should persist and try to meet appeals made to Reason and Conscience by the same sort of arguments.

Readers of the book will find that the much boosted Bhagavad Gita is not left untouched in it. People who try to read Rationalism, Psycho-analysis and what not into the over-worked Gita,—as does Mr. V. V. K. Rangachari, for one,—will do well to meet, if they can, the shrewd comment and exhaustive arguments in in the section on 'The Gita' in which certain unhealthy passages in the 'Lord's Song' are refreshingly dealt with.

The question of the ethical valuation of the Ramayan has just now some topical interest lent to it for Marathi readers by the fact that a controversy on the subject is going on in the columns of the *Dnyan-mandir*, the newly started Marathi magazine in Bombay, following a contribution to its first number from Mr. B. V. Jadhav, the ex-Minister, on 'The Lesson India has learnt from the Ramayan'. I am sure, those of my readers who can follow Marathi will also benefit by this controversy.

D, S. DESHPANDE.

THE KARACHI FIRING.

To the Editor of the "Sunday Statesman."

Sir,—In your leading article of March 23, you have tried to analyse the causes of the Karachi Firing and have wound up by a somewhat arbitrary suggestion that in future as an extreme limit of concession the Muslims should be allowed to perform the last religious rites within the precincts of the prison. This suggestion in itself anticipates a repetition of such executions which are the

result of murders by persons who are known to the non-Muslims as fanatics. This would merely be the remedy and perhaps a very ineffective remedy for an evil. Is it not possible to remove the root cause of such incidents? Let us examine the whole question dispassionately.

What makes Mohammedans mad on such occasions?

Is it the lust of loot? Is it the desire or intention to defy authority? Or is it blood-thirst?

To find a correct answer to these questions you have to take certain psychological effects into consideration. In British law, grave and sudden provocation, though no defence to the crime of using criminal force, is a consideration for the mitigation of the sentence. As far as is known, unwarranted personal injury or the attack on the modesty of a woman related to a person are the chief incidents which set an otherwise rational person raving mad. A Mohammedan as a rule is no exception to such provocation and is readily excited and sometimes driven to take the law in his own hands. But believe me when I tell you as a law-abiding Muslim, that the feelings even of the most docile, even of a coward, Muslim who might not show any struggle if he was battered to death or if he saw the modesty of his wife, sister or mother being outraged are bound to be driven to a state of frenzy if he hears the name of the Prophet being abused. I wish to assure you again that I am not all exaggerating. When a Mohammedan hears of any publication or utterance by any person insulting or abusing the name of the Prophet his first instinct, almost without exception, is to kill that person at the first opportunity. Not all the laws of the world and all the arms and ammunition of the great powers can change this psychology. The actual action of killing the author of such blasphemy may be delayed for fear of punishment but the mentality and the desire to kill the culprit is never satisfied until the revenge has been taken.

After all murder is not the only offence for which capital punishment is awarded. There are civilized countries where men are hanged for the offence of rape and in some parts of the world

people are lynched and hanged by the mob from the first lamp post for the crime of insulting the modesty of a woman.

In short according to the mentality of Mohammedans no punishment short of capital sentence is adequate for blasphemy.

Now in order to convince you of the correctness of this view held by Mohammedans I will ask you to apply the following test. Take the case of a Mohammedan who talks irreverently and commits blasphemy in respect of the Prophets of other religions. If such a person is killed by the followers of the religion whose Prophet he has insulted or abused, you will never find excitement in Mohammedan quarters nor will there be any desire to make any demonstrations nor will there be any feeling of animosity against the murderer.

And if the murderer was executed and a procession of his funeral was taken out by Hindus it would rather invoke the sympathy than resentment of Muslims. Unfortunately there is no such parallel case in the history of this country up to now.

In fact the feelings of the Mohammedans would be, that he deserved to be killed for insulting the memory of the prophets of others' religion. Muslims are indeed enjoined to refrain from saying irreverent things even about the idols of the followers of other religions.

Amendment of law is necessary.

So, the only way to stop a repetition of the incidents of Karachi is to amend the law and make blasphemy punishable with death. Such a law would once and

for all put a dead stop to more blasphemous works or utterances. It would then be no longer necessary for any individual to perform with his own hands what would become the duty of the Government in the ordinary course of law.

It is not a bit of use concealing the fact that when a Muslim kills a person who has committed the offence of blasphemy, *he is considered to be Ghazi while alive and a Shahid (a martyr when executed)* and any Mohammedan who when tries to give any other version of such a case is obviously guilty of hypocrisy which is likely to deceive none.

Of course any idea of looting or killing Hindoos on the occasions of such last rituals, is absurd though it is not unlikely that hooligans might take advantage of such occasions and resort to violence or robbery for their personal benefit.

[The writer of this remarkable letter gives the lie to those conciliatory Muslims who would have us believe that Islamism is not an intolerant creed. It may be so in theory, (There is strong reason to believe that The Prophet was not intolerant) but in practice Islamism has proved itself every where to be the most intolerant creed that has ever existed. A single example among scores of others may be cited. Jews are obliged to assume Mahomedan names in Persia otherwise their lives would be unsafe. One may also add that no other creed is tolerated in Arabia. The writer of the letter in question is wrong when he says that the followers of other religions also would kill people who attack, criticize or insult their founders of prophets. Only a fanatical Mahomedan would do this. Why, the Mahomedans, generally, even resent the criticism of the Koran! What ever may have been their past, no Hindu, Jew, Christian, Parsee or Buddhist would to day kill any body who criticizes, attacks or even insults their prophets and their sacred writings. They would try to refute and defend their creed; may get angry and feel outraged, but no one would think of killing such an offender. ED. REASON.]

If the law could not be amended immediately and some people must indulge in blasphemous utterances and writings and consequently murders and executions must take place, then the next best thing would be to arrange matters in a manner such as was witnessed in the case of certain recent cases when the last religious rites were performed without any untoward happenings. But let me conclude by saying that your suggestion regarding burials within prisons is not a practicable one.

Yours, etc.

A FRANK MUSLIM.

Delhi, March 25.

[We readily publish this letter as a thoughtful comment on our own article and for the interest of its subject matter. By publishing it we do not lend any support to the tremendous change proposed in the law of this land.

—ED. S.]

RELIGION AND FREEDOM.

From times gone by until this century, there has been a large number of believers whose devotion to a supernatural being, however fantastic, has been

deeply rooted in their hearts. There is a thing—the main factor—that will be necessary to abolish. It is religious education.

I believe that one's stubborn fanaticism starts from childhood; that his mysticism is prepared in his early age when his plastic mind is more easily impressed. A child of religious parents begins to receive lessons about God when he is very young. As he grows older his faith is developed, the development of a thing that was not inborn in him but was merely suggested by the education he received. "Why reject God" a believer may ask, as he is convinced of the truth of his existence. He is convinced by the routine prayers which he is compelled to say; by the unreasonable exhortation and teaching of the priests; by the alleged miracles he hears to have happened in temples or grottos, which defy all the axioms of Science. And his conviction becomes more and more solid by the fertility of his imagination. But is all this proof of the truth of a religion?

It is indeed very ridiculous for any religion to rely on such questionable credentials.

There are believers in all sorts of religion and the name of God is repeated throughout all countries.

In this enlightened century, religious beliefs weigh heavily on the majority of people who imagine that religion will save them from awful punishment.

As they cannot release themselves from the adversities of this world they nourish the hope of divine reward in the other realm. But even so, this large number of devout, who outnumber the unbelievers cannot be proud of the kind of belief they hold. Their imagination is full of the chimeras of the unseen. This is why Napoleon addressed Balashor in these ironic words when the latter

told him that the Russians were very religious:—"A great number of monasteries and churches is always a sign of the backwardness of a people." Doubtless he diagnosed rightly the then weakness of Russia.

As Science has advanced so much we have no need of the Sacred Scriptures to know the truth. It would be a waste of mental energy since the book of Nature should be all sufficient for the truth seeker.

Is it not monstrous that because a man is a honest truth seeker and would rather follow rational thoughts, the religion of his parents considers him as a social leper and would bury him as a mangy dog?

In some quarters even if he makes the acquaintance of a Rationalist he would be rigidly branded as a heathen and would be a wicked heretic if he reads books on materialism or others enlisted in the Index.

Religion strictly forbids its faithful flock to be in contact with anything that is against its doctrines.

It does its best to prevent its adherents from knowing the damaging truth. Why should religion impose such restrictions if the truth it teaches was self evident? It is because the very essence of religion; the secret of it, so to say, is founded on fiction. The believers are prevented from acquiring knowledge which may open their minds and allow them to see the hollowness of creeds. To accomplish this religion threatens the timid and ignorant with eternal punishment in the hereafter and thus maintains its sway in the world. Is there any wonder that religion dreads that kind of education which enlightens the mind?

No one can pretend to a certain knowledge of a transcendent being and can give us unmistakable proofs of his existence. If some people willingly worship such an imaginary being, the multitude do it through fear—fear of punishment that they believe may be meted to them after death by that unknown quantity they call God. As death ends all these deluded people will probably never know that they have been deluded throughout.

From a rationalistic point of view, all religious ceremonies and preaching are a pure waste of time. They affect the march of progress disadvantageously as the mind is encouraged in pursuing a will-o-the-wisp,—theso-called spiritual exercises. Who knows the losses civilization suffers by the absorption of so many minds in useless pursuit of things imaginary?

This can only be prevented if religious education was abolished. If the mind was unhampered by wrong impressions.

It is only when civilization recognizes this fact clearly that men may strive to learn without fear or restriction so as to discover the truth of their own mental efforts. Will people be ever encouraged to think for themselves? Will such an advancement ever happen? Will the World ever cast off the fetters of superstitions that are a bane to progress? To judge by the number of thoughtful people in the world, by the number of those who are not swayed by mass suggestion, it will take a very long time indeed, if the time ever happens, that vested interest shall be powerless to influence the minds of men.

J. G. Soares D'Almeida.
Atraz da Camara Margao
Portuguesa India, 8. May 1935

To

The Editor,

'REASON'.

Sir,

It was most interesting to read in the Notes and Happenings of the March issue of Reason about the cases related by Dr. Jacob Solomon L. M. & S.

It really must have been a welcome relief to the readers of the medical magazine to have a few minutes amusement among the rest of the articles which must certainly have been very serious reading. And I am sure the editor of that esteemed magazine must have accepted it for no other purpose than this, forgetting for the time being that it was a medical magazine and not an Illustrated Weekly.

Except for this there is no other excuse for the publication of that article in a medical magazine.

It is most astonishing to note that no objection whatsoever was taken by the other doctors on the publication of such nonsensical articles in a magazine which went into the hands of medical students. This is nothing less than blasphemy against Medical Science. And there is greater cause for objection as we note that the article proceeds from one who is an L. M. & S.

Not satisfied with relating absurd cases Dr. Jacob Solomon L. M. & S goes on to add to our Medical Dictionary a new discovery of his own "Magnetised Water."

I think Dr. Jacob Soloman would have been more successful in another sphere than that of a doctor, (If I may be allowed to make a suggestion). He

seems to be an adept in the art of finding out whether a case is of ordinary illness or that of evil possession.

It is well that both author and magazine are miles away from the city of Bombay where I feel sure such publications would never pass unchallenged.

I am sure the readers of Reason will agree that the article was treated with undue mildness by the editor of this journal.

Yours faithfully,
ASTRON.

An Interesting Debate.

A debate was held under the joint auspices of the Rationalist Youth League and the Rationalist Association of India on Saturday 27th. April at the Blavatsky Lodge at 6 p. m.

The subject under discussion was 'Science has done more for the Progress of Humanity than Religion'.

The speakers for the proposition were Mr. S. A. Megherian and Mr. Kaniyalal Vakil while Rev. Scott and Mr. S. S. Kavalekar opposed the proposition. Dr. G. V. Deshmukh presided.

There were more than 300 present.

Mr. Megherian in moving the proposition said "Progress is nothing else but the desire of human beings to master time and space". The speaker further added that another factor included in Progress is pain and this question of pain both Religion and Science have tried to solve. "But what terrible suffering," continued the speaker, "Religion has caused in its search for human happiness". Religion of today was nothing else but a refined conglomerate

tion of the superstitions of caveman. Science is based upon the finest courage, the courage which sacrifices without any desire of reward. On the courage which sacrifices without any desire of reward. On the other hand there is not a single Religion which did not say that what ever you do you will reap the reward seven or even tenfold.

Rev. Scott opposing the proposition said that he did not defend anything and everything that was done in the name of Religion, nor was he an opponent of Science, but he could show from citing the highest authorities of Science itself that a religious impulse was necessary for the genuine progress of mankind. In the words of Bertrand Russell, "Increase of Science in itself is not sufficient to guarantee the general progress of humanity". He also pointed out that Mr. Stanley Baldwin himself had wished that air craft were never invented. Science of this type, viz. aircraft was beyond human control and therefore detrimental to the genuine progress of humanity.

Speaking of the good Religion had done for humanity Rev. Scott said that many an unselfish man had gladly and unselfishly suffered for the good of humanity, and that in India missionary institutions had done a great deal towards the the progress of the country in particular and humanity at large, facilitating not only the education of men but also of women. "Even the great scientist, Mr. Thomas had admitted a few years before his death said Rev. Scott, that it would be impossible for genuine progress to be effective as long as man was not spiritual."

Mr. Kaniyalal Vakil speaking for the proposition said that Religion enforced

certain Beliefs of its followers irrespective of these beliefs being true or not.

Pointing out the difference between the Scientific outlook and the Religious outlook the speaker said that while the Scientist does not say the last thing in any matter the Religious man asserts and takes things for granted. The speaker laid stress on the fact that not a single day passed by in India without a Hindu-Muslim clash somewhere; and all this was done in the name of Religion alone.

Mr. Vakil concluded by saying that the scientific man was a superrealist.

Mr. Kavlekar the next speaker observed that there was no real conflict between Religion and Science and further added that they had a common aim viz. the progress of humanity. The speaker contended that progress lay in the simple and artistic development of human life and held that Religion had made man more humble and humane. It was only when Religion and not Science dictated to politics that the world could attain peace. Humanity marched to progress not under the leadership of scientists, but under the leadership of such great prophets like Christ and Buddha.

Mr. Megherian in his reply to the opposition said that Religion having killed, persecuted, tortured and done everything possible to suppress research and investigation and the spirit of inquiry, realised its helplessness and found that the only way out was to say that there was no antagonism between Religion and Science. As regards Mr. Kavlekar's statement that lack of peace in the world was due to the sway of Science in politics Mr. Megherian asked if there was a single scientist in any ministry of the world. Politics is dominated by Religion rather than the spirit of Science. Scientists are more busy in the pursuit of Truth. With regard to Rev. Scott's argument about Science being out of control, Mr. Megherian asked how many times Religion was not out of control.

The debate was a great success.

Dr. Deshmukh decided not to put the proposition to vote and wound up the debate by congratulating the Rationalist Youth League for their activities and thanked the speakers for the cordial and able manner in which the debate was conducted.